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THE
CHRIST OF APOSTOLIC FAITH

THE CHRIST OF APOSTOLIC FAITH

Andrews, Herbert Tom
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BY
H. T. ANDREWS
D.D.
LATE PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT EXEGESIS
IN HACKNEY AND NEW COLLEGE, LONDON

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR
BY
JESSIE FORSYTH ANDREWS
M.A.

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INTRODUCTION

By Principal H. Wheeler Robinson

At the time of his death, Professor Andrews was engaged on a volume dealing with *The Person of Christ*, for Nisbets' "Library of Constructive Theology." Of this volume little more than the section dealing with the New Testament—about a third of the whole—had been fully written. As this section was complete in itself, and the manuscript needed no more than ordinary revision for the press, it is here published, for the sake of its intrinsic value to the student of the New Testament. It was intended that the larger book should include (in the next four chapters) discussions of Christ as a moral teacher, of the "mystical" and of the redemptive experience of Him, and of the revelational value of His Person; subsequent chapters would have dealt with the philosophical implications of the moral and redemptive experience, on the one hand, and of the "mystical" and revelational experience, on the other. The conclusion to which the author would have led us is plain from the completed portion of the work—that Christ cannot be explained by any terms or categories lower than the highest which contemporary thought may afford.

Those who read the present book, whilst grateful for this lucid and competent treatment of the

Christology of the New Testament on the basis of the Christian consciousness of the first century, will realize something of what they have lost in the way of a similar treatment of the whole field, and will be ready to concur in the sober and balanced judgment of the "Memoir" prefixed to this book—that Dr. Andrews was distinguished by fine scholarship, originality of mind, and a devout and sympathetic spirit. Those of us who were privileged to know him as a friend are conscious of a greater loss than that of the larger book, the loss of a man who made Christ more real to us by his manifest possession of the primary fruit of the Spirit of Christ—love, joy, peace.

My own editorial work on the manuscript has been strictly confined to such verbal corrections and minor adjustments as my colleague would himself have made. It has also been read by Professor Vernon Bartlet, his fellow-student in the earliest days of Mansfield College.

H. W. R.

Oxford, 1929.

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MEMOIR

PORTER : Will you not stay till morning ?

GREAT-HEART : No, I will return to my Lord to-night.

CHRISTIANA : Oh, Sir, I know not how to be willing you should leave us in our pilgrimage. You have been so faithful and loving to us, you have fought so stoutly for us, you have been so hearty in counselling us, that I shall never forget your favour towards us.

Pilgrim's Progress.

MEMOIR

HERBERT TOM ANDREWS was born on December 22nd, 1864, in Oxford. But that is not to say that he was born in the academic purple, for indeed he had but little intellectual heritage. His forbears were Oxfordshire yeoman stock. His father was a grocer's traveller and a capable business man, who later became a director of the firm of Grimbley Hughes, of Oxford. His mother, though she had a rather keen intellect, was not highly educated; but she had endowed him with even better things—her force of character and her deep religious convictions. Between her and this her first-born of seven there existed always the strongest bond of sympathy, and it was she who turned his early thoughts towards the ministry.

His education is interesting from its beginnings, because he was a successful product of what was then—the eighteen-seventies—a daring experiment in democratic education. Having begun at a little British School, where his father paid a few pence a week for him, he passed on to the Central School, which had been established in the buildings of George Street Congregational Church as the result of the interest of Congregationalists in national education. The staff was unusual for a school of that type, because many of the masters were them-

selves working for a degree, and could give classical teaching. The little eager boy with the happy smile had already thrown himself with zest into every sort of lesson they could give him ; and when they tried him with Latin and then Greek, he took to them with avidity. That opportunity, and his response to it, laid the foundation of his life-work. But he was to have further chances, and to use them. Before long the Central School was merged in an even more important educational venture, the Oxford High School for Boys. This, the first City Council School in England, was founded through the democratic enthusiasm and farsightedness of Thomas Hill Green, the philosopher, just then at the height of his power and influence. He had long fought against the tradition that educational opportunity should be determined by social position. He dared to hope that the time would come when the phrase " the education of a gentleman " would have lost its meaning, " because the sort of education which alone makes the gentleman in any true sense will be within the reach of all." He himself founded a scholarship tenable at the school for boys from the elementary schools of the city, hoping that " just as it used to be said that every soldier in Napoleon's army felt that he carried a marshal's baton in his knapsack, so every Oxford boy with sufficient energy and intellect will carry the key to the University in his brains."

Among the earliest group of boys who more than justified these hopes was young Andrews. From the

High School he won an open classical scholarship at Magdalen—a "demyship"—which in those days was regarded as the inviolable preserve of the great public schools of the Eton and Harrow type; and he won it on his Greek prose. He went up to Magdalen in 1883, and as a demy he was given some of the best rooms in the college, overlooking the Deer Park. His delight in them was very great; and before leaving them he made the discovery, probably made by others before and since, that deer can digest old note-books and thrive on them. He had not much time for the lighter side of University life. All his life long he was keenly interested in games and athletics, without ever achieving any sort of proficiency in them. Even in the golf he played so assiduously in later years, he could never go round in less than twenty above bogey. At college the one relaxation he gave himself, other than walking, was rowing; but that was chiefly in vacation, and not in an eight. He did some of his hardest thinking then, lying flat in a boat in a backwater; and he once said in after life that there were two places, and two only, where he truly felt himself master of the situation—a boat and a lecture-room. He had not time at college for a great many friendships; but Percy Alden and he continued the companionship begun at school. One temporary intimacy is worth recording, because it is unexpected, and because it probably influenced his whole outlook—his friendship with the late Duke of Newcastle (who died in June 1928), even in those

early days an ardent Anglo-Catholic. Utterly different in their origins and their traditions, the two were drawn together by their central religious fervour. They "tired the sun with talking, and sent him down the sky"—only to find that each had strengthened his own position, and yet had learned, at any rate in the case of the young Free Churchman, a respect for the other's point of view.

He received much kindness from many influential people in the University who knew his circumstances. Amongst them were Herbert Warren, then President of Magdalen, Mrs. T. H. Green, and Mrs. Humphry Ward, whose children he coached during one vacation while she was writing *Robert Elsmere*. That was one of various ways in which he paid for his own education, from his school-days onwards; it is worth while recording that during the seven years of his University course he won scholarships and prizes to the amount of £800. He had a curious foresight in the matter of examination questions, both his own and, later, his pupils'. But he made one serious error in tactics, and overworked so badly in 1887 that he got only a second in "Greats."

Then arose the question of his future. He confessed frankly in later years that he had felt the fascination of many professions—medicine, law, politics, philanthropy; and the possibility of a purely academic career, beginning with a college fellowship in Oxford, seems to have been open to him. He and his friend A. S. Peake alternated with each other in winning various prizes. They were both

in for a Merton fellowship in 1890, and Peake won it. Andrews had also narrowly missed a New College fellowship. But both these were prize-fellowships, involving residence for a year only ; and there was never any real doubt in his mind that the ministry was his vocation. In his school-days he had taken a large share of responsibility for the Sunday School at Temple Cowley, a village just outside Oxford, and had trudged faithfully backwards and forwards every Sunday, week in and week out, no matter what examination was on the horizon. Even before he went up to Magdalen he was already preaching in small churches in the neighbourhood, where he is still remembered as a tall, slim youth with a natural gift for preaching. His greatest admiration in those days was for Robert Forman Horton, then a fellow of New College. The young don, who had rowed in his college eight and won a great reputation as President of the Union, had a gracious charm of personality and a beauty of spirit which revealed itself in every word, public or private ; and when, at the pinnacle of his University fame, he resigned it all to become the minister of a newly formed London church, he seemed to the younger man to be a completely admirable human pattern.

Again the way seemed to open before Andrews, as it had in his school-days. Mansfield College was beginning its existence in Oxford. The buildings were only just begun ; but lectures were given by Dr. Fairbairn in a large room at 90, High Street. Andrews was formally admitted in 1887, Dr. Dale

being in the chair. Among his contemporaries were Silvester Horne, W. B. Selbie, Norman Smith, Vernon Bartlet, Buchanan Gray, Percy Alden, and A. E. Garvie. Andrews had taken a Dr. Williams Divinity scholarship just before going to Mansfield, and during his course he won in the University the Senior Septuagint Prize, the Ellerton Theological Essay Prize, and the Denyer and Johnson scholarship. He spent one of his long vacations in Germany, at Marburg, where the attraction was the lectures of Herrmann, one of the greatest of the Ritschlian school. Andrews managed to acquire enough German to read it for theology ; but he had really no faculty at all for living languages, his ear for them being defective. In his last year at Mansfield he became Senior Student, and in that capacity he once acted as host to Mr. Gladstone in the Junior Common Room, the college having entered into possession of its buildings. Although he did not himself smoke at that time, it was he who with some difficulty persuaded Dr. Fairbairn to sanction smoking in the J.C.R. (He did not learn to smoke till he was thirty ; and then it was a deacon of his Swansea church who taught him.)

By the time he left Mansfield he had made up his mind quite clearly that he was called not only to become a minister himself, but to train others for the ministry. To do that efficiently, he knew that he must have experience as a working pastor. He planned to spend five years in getting experience, and then become a professor ; and so it fell out.

In 1890 he was ordained to the Spicer Memorial Church at Chingford in Essex ; in 1892 he went to St. Paul's Church, Swansea ; and in 1895 he became a professor at Cheshunt College. The two churches were so different that they gave him excellent experience. The Chingford church, built largely through the energy and generosity of the Spicer family, was set in a residential and almost rural neighbourhood, much dominated by the Established Church, and its members were Free Churchmen of all complexions. The Swansea church was an old-established one in the heart of a prosperous commercial town, and as he said, " it was a great change from being the leader of a forlorn hope on the extreme edge of the outer circle, to come as a minister of the great ' established ' church of Wales—established, that is, in the hearts and lives and consciences of the people."

In 1891, he married Edith Mary Birt, of Oxford. He had two children, Winifred Winterborne, now Mrs. C. McKenzie Wells, and Horace Gordon. From their babyhood they were an unfailing source of joy and interest to him, and in later years the close bond and happy companionship between him and them remained unbroken.

With varied experience of practical ministerial work added to his scholarship, he felt fully equipped in 1895 for the opportunity of beginning his real life-work, the training of others for the ministry. He was appointed to the vacant professorship of

Church History and Historical Theology at Cheshunt College, under Owen Whitehouse. The college was then actually at Cheshunt, in Essex. The staff was small, but entirely congenial. In addition to their work with the students, he and his colleague E. W. Johnson visited the village churches connected with the college, ran a small " Pleasant Sunday Afternoon " in a hall, discussed Housing and Public Library schemes with groups of working-men in their clubs, and found keen delight in getting into touch with the people in their workshops or nursery gardens. It was here that he began to take a vivid interest in the development of the University of London on its theological side—an interest he never lost, and one with which the last working hours of his life were occupied.

In 1903, with his appointment as professor of New Testament Exegesis in succession to W. F. Adeney, who had become principal of Lancashire College, began that twenty-four-years' connexion with Hackney College and New College which was to be his main life-work. The two London Colleges of Congregationalism were then separate as to their financial arrangements and government ; but the two of them, and Regent's Park Baptist College, had already pooled the greater part of their teaching resources. P. T. Forsyth at Hackney, Vaughan Pryce at New College (succeeded a few years later by A. E. Garvie), and Gould at Regent's Park, were all engaged in bringing the colleges into line with the requirements of the lately established London

B.D., and thereby giving them the status of Divinity Schools of the University of London ; and into that scheme Andrews threw himself with zest and vigour, for it was a project after his own heart. Once more he was specially happy in his colleagues. His greatest intimate was W. H. Bennett, and the friendship continued after Bennett's removal to Manchester, to succeed Adeney. But he spent much time in the company of Forsyth, who depended greatly upon his judgment and help in all college and University matters ; and latterly he was in close intellectual intimacy with Wheeler Robinson of Regent's Park.

Andrews took up no specific social work in London such as he had begun at Cheshunt—the reason being that he found it too fascinating and absorbing to be compatible with his other work. (One of the great admirations of his life was for F. W. Newland, the brilliant Oxford man who had given himself to the slums of Pentonville.) Like all his colleagues, he worked seven days a week, and would have been glad of an eighth to catch up in. Like them, he lectured two or three mornings a week, sometimes four hours in succession, spent hours in committee-work, formal or informal, in the service of the colleges or of the denomination, and in the journeys to and fro which devour much time and energy. This left him little enough time for necessary reading and writing ; but above and beyond it, he went gladly to preach afternoon and evening on a week-day at the anniversary services of small village churches ; and nothing gave him more joy than to

preach his collar limp on summer afternoons in a small chapel packed with country people from near and far. He was close to Liverpool Street on his way to a village anniversary, when the station was bombed in a daylight raid during the war. He had to wait two hours before he could get a train ; but he went. Several times he took complete charge of some weak or harassed church, whose problems needed much private consideration as well as committee-work. In addition, his connexion with the University of London grew closer and more responsible as the years passed. His strong democratic sympathies drew him to it, as embodying that ideal of T. H. Green's which had meant so much for himself ; though nothing ever shook his belief that Oxford " Greats " represented the finest education in the world. He was a member of the London University Board of Studies in Theology from 1901 to 1927, and chairman of it for three years (and he often boasted genially that the *odium theologicum* was dead, for this Board was notable for the harmonious working together of its members). To this he added, gradually, membership of the History Board, the Classical Board, and the Matriculation Board. From 1925 until his death he was a member of the Senate of the University and of the Academic Council. Committee-work was no joy to him, and rather wearied him—but he missed few meetings ; and that meant that he spent at least one afternoon a week at South Kensington for the greater part of the year.

Oddly enough, he never took his Oxford M.A.—for lack of means in his earlier days, and because it did not matter later. He received an honorary D.D. from Aberdeen in 1913, on the strength of his critical work on the Old Testament Apocryphal Books, and particularly of his translation of the *Epistle of Aristeas*, which was included in the Oxford *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, edited by Charles in 1913. He had before that written a Century Bible Handbook on the Apocryphal Books, and a Commentary on Acts in the Westminster New Testament. In 1915 he brought out a small book on *The Value of the Theology of St. Paul*. He wrote much for encyclopædias, notably the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, *Chambers'*, and the *Universal Encyclopædia ;* and he contributed "Apocalyptic Literature," "Daniel," "I and II Thessalonians" and "Revelation" to Peake's one-volume Commentary. He had also written "Hebrews" for the forthcoming *Abingdon Bible Commentary*. The year before his death he delivered the Drew Lecture on Immortality at the Memorial Hall, choosing as his subject "The Teaching of Jesus concerning the Future Life."

His first wife died in 1911, and in 1915 he married Jessie Caroline, only child of P. T. Forsyth. About this time his name was more than once suggested for the principalship of a theological college—one in England, one in the Dominions ; but he preferred his London position to either. During

Forsyth's long illness Andrews acted as vice-principal of Hackney, and but for the amalgamation of the two colleges after Forsyth's death, would probably have succeeded him. He was, in fact, asked to remain as Vice-Principal, or Resident Warden; but the position would have involved a large amount of domestic and administrative detail for which he had neither time nor liking, and he preferred to remain as he was. He had intended to remain on the college staff until the normal retiring-age of sixty-five, and then to leave London and allow himself the luxury of book-writing. But he had already overtaxed his strength. In December 1926, without the slightest warning, he fainted while lecturing. Though he did not know it, he was really suffering from what doctors call "tired heart," as well as from another trouble which was insidiously sapping his vitality. After a rest of a few weeks he began work again and gradually reached the same pitch of activity as before. To those nearest him he seemed to flag during the summer of 1927; but he began the October term with the greatest energy —lecturing at college, preaching here and there, addressing a society of theologians at Cambridge— and making time every week to visit a dying lady, scarcely known to him before, who found in him great strength and comfort.

A slight illness stopped his work in November, and in December a major operation was found to be imperative and was successfully performed. But complications set in from which the overtaxed heart

could not recover, and he died on New Year's Day of 1928, ten days after his sixty-third birthday.

. . . . . .

There is nothing that is unusual or outstanding in the events of his life. It was that of a typical theological professor of to-day, a life spent from first to last in incessant and arduous work for the Kingdom of God, an even more strenuous existence than that of the average minister, which is saying much. In the last few years of his life he never had a Sunday free, except when he was ill; and Monday, often the minister's holiday, is the chosen day for University committees.

But in personality he seemed, to those who knew him well, to possess something which marked him off from his fellows. His uniqueness lay perhaps in the balance and harmony of his character. He combined the seemingly incompatible qualities of serenity and eagerness. Serenity rayed out from him as light from the sun. You could not vex, or irritate, or annoy him, though he could be moved to quiet, deep, and almost implacable anger by certain faults; for the hardened spendthrift, for instance, he had little mercy. He could, and did, speak sternly in rebuke to those for whom he was responsible, when no other method would serve. There were times when the gentle, genial manner disappeared and revealed the rock-firm will within. It was a fellow-student who said of him that he reversed Bismarck's famous epigram about Lord Salisbury, and that he was "iron, painted to look

like lath." But he held very emphatically that no one has a right to criticize or even advise others unasked, much less to dictate—that people have an inalienable right to hold their own opinions and go their own way, even to their own confusion. It was this very doctrine of non-interference that made his advice so perpetually sought after, by men and women of all types and classes. Allied to this was the large tolerance—the hospitality of mind—which made him an able chairman and a good colleague.

Serenity and calm are sometimes the result of lethargy ; but with him it was not so, though in late life the fact that his big physique was something under-engined for its beam gave that impression. Eagerness and enthusiasm characterized him from his childhood to the very end. At school the little eager fellow had to be put out of the singing-class because he sang so lustily—and so out of tune. (He was tone-deaf all his life.) For everything that he attempted or took an interest in, he had that same boyish zest ; and it was infectious. Therein, to a great extent, lay the secret of his success as a teacher—in that, and in the fact that he taught, not out of books, nor even from notes (though in his earlier years he wrote them rather fully), but from the white-hot experience of his own soul. Moreover, he had the art of clarifying and popularizing the early stages of an abstruse subject, and by means of it he led his pupils on, so that they ultimately shared the fruits of his ripe scholarship.

There were more than mental barriers to break

down. His students were drawn largely from devout homes in which such things as verbal inspiration were tacitly accepted. In his lectures they had their first contact with modern scientific Biblical criticism. It was his task to remove their errors without undermining their whole faith. He did it skilfully and effectually, not only feeding their intellects but quickening their minds; so that, when the bell rang and the lecture hour was over, they went from the room saying, after their own fashion, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us and opened to us the Scriptures?" It happened occasionally at the end of a lecture that, after a moment's silence, they gave vent to their sense of exaltation by applause. He was never merely a source of information—he was an influence; his personality awakened men's curiosity to know the secret of its power, and made them ready to accept the truths which so bore fruit in him. Any description of him as a lecturer would be incomplete without allusion to his funny characteristic mannerisms. His favourite gesture was to be perpetually "washing his hands with invisible soap in imperceptible water." Another was to tug violently at the lapels of his coat; while he often courted, and sometimes achieved, physical disaster by his habit of swaying vigorously to and fro in his chair as he spoke. But trivialities like these could not hinder the attention of his hearers.

In his preaching—and there are many who admire

him most who have known him only as preacher—though there was scholarship, there was nothing in the least academic. "I have heard all the leading political speakers of the last twenty-five years, and many of the great preachers of that period; but I can truly say that none of them had more of the spirit of elevated speech than Andrews," writes James Johnston, the author of *Westminster Voices*. "He was essentially one of the elect few who are from time to time taken possession of by the spirit of speech, and compelled by a power beyond their control to declare the things revealed to them. Judged by the standards of the most fastidious listener, he was lacking in qualities which are counted attractive. He had no charm or beauty of voice, and to the end he spoke with the accent of his native Oxford. He had never learned to use his voice effectively, and had no real knowledge of how its defects might be mitigated and its usefulness increased; but he transcended these vocal deficiencies by means of his fervour. Once the spirit of speech took hold of him, the defects were forgotten in the onrush of ideas and words which swept speaker and listener alike into the higher spheres of feeling. He wielded the pen with effect, but the spoken and not the written word was his natural medium of expression; and through it he disclosed the prophetic strain in him, which was concealed in private beneath the easy-going geniality of his manner. He had something of the dramatic quality which Joseph Parker possessed, but there was

nothing studied in his dramatic utterances. It was the natural way in which the inspiration to which he was subject worked upon him, and probably the last thing which he would have imagined himself to be was a dramatic preacher."

Because he was a man of an original mind, who did his own thinking upon every point, it has seemed strange to some, as well as a matter of regret, that he wrote no important book. The reasons why he did not are characteristic. The first was that he gave himself and his time and energy so freely, not only in the recognized work attached to his position, but in "little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love." The second was his firm belief that it was a man's duty, so far as in him lay, to provide for his own old age and for those who might depend on him. He had planned to retire from college at the regulation age of sixty-five with a sufficient income to allow of the luxury of writing books on his own subject, not a lucrative occupation. To be able to do this he had denied himself many pleasures, and had taken up rather drudging but not ill-paid work, such as encyclopædia articles, and coaching by correspondence—of which he did a great deal for more than twenty-five years.

That leads to the mention of another characteristic in which he was uncommon. One does not often find a college professor who is also an expert in finance ; but he combined these characters. He had a great interest in finance, without being in the

smallest degree mastered by the desire for money. The money-market was his hobby; the first thing he looked at in *The Times* was the financial page (and the second was the football or cricket results). He gave this capacity, as freely as he gave everything else, to the service of God. Several churches —notably Brondesbury Park in North London, and Gerrard's Cross in Buckinghamshire—owe their continued existence and comparative prosperity to his business acumen and foresight, and the knack he had of picking his way through a financial morass on to firm ground. But one thing he invariably shunned, and indeed had no gift for—begging money from individuals.

Among his engaging oddities was the disparity between the outward and the inward man in the matter of orderliness. Outwardly he was extremely untidy—and almost deliberately so. He hated to look too neat, and he was the despair of those responsible for his appearance. His desk was always an indescribable welter of books and papers and letters and tobacco and last year's empty envelopes—through which, when necessity arose, he would clear a space with the movement of one swimming breast-stroke. But this disorder rooted in true order stood. His mind was of the clearest and most penetrating, his thought-processes most logical and lucid, and his style in speech and writing luminous and "legato" (Forsyth's word for it). His method in writing was to think for hours, in a position of complete ease, with a pipe, often cold, in

his mouth; then to turn to his desk and write straight on, without altering, rearranging, or deleting. One of his most damnatory criticisms was to say of another person "X has got an untidy mind."

But what most people remember about him was his sheer human lovableness. Big in mind and body, he was irresistibly attracted to small things, and they to him. He had a sort of magnetic influence over babies (it was the only quality he was vain of). A railway journey with a child in the carriage was a completely happy one for him; a fretful baby in a bus was smiling and making advances at him within five minutes. He never wanted to score off people; he was never censorious or disparaging; he seldom spoke in depreciation; he suffered fools gladly; but he appraised people more shrewdly than they always realized, and his judgment of character seemed almost infallible. He was not witty, nor apt in verbal dexterities; but his ever-bubbling humour stood the final test—he loved a joke against himself. His happy smile was a thing noticed and remembered by people who knew him only a little, and it was an outward manifestation of his large and inexhaustible human kindness. "One of the things I think most of to-day," wrote James Johnston in the *Christian World*, "is the simplicity which he united with his learning, the boyish frankness which the weight of his scholarship never checked or depressed. He had a fund of laughter which few men in middle or late age possess, and he drew upon it in prodigal fashion. He had the keenest eye for

the grotesque and the humorous, and a joke, a narrative with a comic touch, produced that genial chuckling laugh of his which once heard was always remembered. He was up to the last the schoolboy, a stranger to every form of pretence, artless, modest, playful. It was always delightful to meet him, and one always left his presence feeling that one had been in contact with the sweet and vivifying air of sunlit spaces."

It came to the minds of several who knew him, unknown to each other, to call him "Mr. Great-heart"—"the servant of the God of Heaven, the guide of the Pilgrims who were going to the Celestial Country," the slayer of Giant Despair, the demolisher of Doubting Castle. "They prayed their guide to strike a light, that they might go the rest of their way by the help of the light of a lantern. So he struck a light, and they went by the help of that through the rest of this way, though the darkness was very great."

JESSIE FORSYTH ANDREWS.

THE CHRIST OF APOSTOLIC FAITH

CHAPTER I

THE INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

WHEN Auguste Comte enunciated his law of the three stages, and said that the development of human knowledge always passed through three progressive phases—first the theological, then the metaphysical, and finally the positive or scientific, theologians and philosophers alike raged against him, like the heathen of the Psalmist, and said that he had imagined a vain thing.

But Comte was right after all, and paradoxical though it may seem to say so, Theology itself has passed through the same three stages, though it calls them by different names, viz. the dogmatic, the philosophical, and the psychological.

If we ask the question, What is the ultimate basis upon which Theology rests? What are the foundation facts upon which it builds? What are the final data with which it deals? we find that three answers have been given to our enquiry.

The first may be called the dogmatic answer and it takes two forms. In the first form the authoritative data are regarded as the decisions of the Church which have been enshrined in the historical creeds: in the second form they are the statements

or theologoumena of Holy Writ. The task of the theologian is to expound, expand and elucidate these authoritative statements of the Creeds or of the Scriptures, and articulate them as best he may into an organic system.

The weakness of the dogmatic method lies in the fact that its ultimate data are anything but ultimate. They inevitably raise many previous questions. These authoritative creeds—how and why were they drawn up? What does the faith which they embody rest upon in the final analysis? What is the justification for these statements? These theologoumena of the Scriptures—how were they arrived at and what is the source from which they were derived? Before we can accept the statements either of the Creeds or the Scriptures at their face valuation, we must have some guarantee which will assure us of their validity. And if we are told that it was the action of the Holy Spirit, working through the leaders of the Church or the writers of the New Testament by way of inspiration, that answers for the validity of their statements—then the *onus probandi* is obviously shifted from the external statements to the inner spiritual process by which they were produced. In other words, the psychological issue is raised at once.

The second method of Theology is the philosophical. Its aim and purpose may be summed up in the dictum of Fichte, "We are not saved by history, but by metaphysics." It is the attempt to construe religion—and especially the Christian

faith—in the terms of a philosophical system ; and in most cases the principles of the philosophical system are the primary element and the facts of religion secondary. Philo of Alexandria attempted to bring the faith of the Old Testament within the four corners of the Platonic theory, and any material that proved intractable along ordinary lines he transmuted by means of the allegorical method of interpretation. Origen did the same thing in the same way for the New Testament, and it is always an open question whether Platonism or Christianity is the dominant partner in his theology. Spinoza in modern times, starting from the pure laws of thought, evolved from them by methods of deduction his pantheistic interpretation of the Universe. Kant and Fichte and Schelling and Hegel, all of them tried in different ways to impose the principles of their philosophy on the Christian facts. The noblest example of the method in recent years is to be found in the magnificent attempt of Edward Caird, who in his *Evolution of Religion* attempts to interpret the history of religion in the categories of Neo-Hegelianism. There would be something to be said for the method, if there were a system of philosophy which could be said to have won the *consensus gentium* and authenticated itself to reason and to conscience in such a way as to secure universal recognition. But the *consensus gentium* has yet to be reached. There is still truth in the old saying that we are all born into the world as either Platonists or Aristotelians. And while the funda-

mental difference exists, it is vain to look to philosophy for a true interpretation of the Christian Faith. A philosophy of the Christian religion of course there must be, but it must be a philosophy that grows out of the Christian facts and not one that is imposed upon the facts from without.

The third method, answering to Comte's positive or scientific stage, is the psychological. The foundation facts according to this theory are to be found in religious experience. It is in religious experience, and in that alone, that ultimate data are to be found for the interpretation of faith. The founder and creator of the new method was undoubtedly Schleiermacher. His *Glaubenslehre* was to theology what Bacon's *Novum Organum* was to physical science. He brought theology back from the high *a priori* road of Hegel and the philosophers, and told the world that the only way to understand religion and its value, truth and significance, was to analyse the content of the religious consciousness. Of his own analysis of that consciousness it is unnecessary to speak. For his real contribution, like Lord Bacon's, was in the formulation of the principles of the new method rather than in the particular details of the work which he did along the new lines. He is the pioneer and speaks the first word on the survey of the new territory—not the last. Schleiermacher has had many followers in modern times. Chief among the hierophants of the new method may be mentioned Auguste Sabatier and William James the psychologist. Sabatier in his *Religions of*

Authority and the Religion of the Spirit has defined the true method of theology thus :

> " The proper object of theology is the study of religious phenomena in general and Christian phenomena in particular. . . . Religious phenomena are psychological facts which everybody discovers first in himself and then in the past. Theology therefore has two sources—psychology and history—and their union must constitute its entire method of observation, direct and indirect."[1]

And William James in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* gives a similar definition of the operation of the new method. It deals with

> " the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine."[2]

In many ways William James's book is one of the most interesting and illuminating of the attempts that have been made to use the new method in the investigation of the problems of religion.

The task that lies before us in the present investigation is to apply the new method to one of the most important branches of Christian Doctrine—the doctrine of the Person of Christ. There will be two main issues that we shall have to face. The first is concerned with the data, the second with the interpretation that is to be put upon them.

[1] English translation, p. 348. [2] p. 31.

The data may be described in the words which we have just quoted from William James—" the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men " produced by the impact of Jesus Christ upon their lives. Our main theme, therefore, is concerned with the Christ of experience—the impression that Christ has made upon the minds and souls of men, when He has broken into their consciousness and claimed them as His own. But there is one point at which we must widen the definition suggested by James. Though from a psychological point of view we ought certainly to start with the individual experience, it is no less certain that we ought not to ignore the " group experience " of Christ, the experience that has come to men through the church or the religious society of which they are members. The " group experience " or " the Church experience " of Christ is quite as important, and quite as valid, for our purpose, as the experience of the individual Christian—perhaps even more important and more valid. The importance of the " group experience," as a means of correcting the possible vagaries and idiosyncrasies of the individual experience, will become more apparent as our discussion proceeds.

But the collection of the data is only part—and not even the most part—of our work. When we have tabulated our facts, we cannot leave them lying loose in disorder. There is very little profit to be gained from a psychological investigation which contents itself merely with description. The analysis of the experience of the religious conscious-

ness in its contact with Christ must inevitably have a bearing upon our conception of Christ. It has always had a bearing. The theology of the early Church grew out of its religious experience, and it was the experience itself that in the first place led men to strive for an explanation which should give a satisfactory interpretation of the amazing influence which Christ had exercised over their hearts and morals. It will, therefore, be part of our task to examine some of these explanations and estimate their value for our own interpretation of Christ. The main question for us in our enquiry will always be, What light does religious experience throw upon the Person of Christ ?

But obviously we must start with the facts ; and for our purpose there are two sets of facts : (1) the historical, which are mainly concerned with the earthly life of Christ, and with the records of the impression which His life and teaching made upon His contemporaries ; (2) the more purely psychological facts, which are concerned with the spiritual influence of Christ upon the souls of men throughout the ages.

But the mention of the word " facts " raises an important problem at once. What is a fact—whether it be a fact of history or a fact of experience ? The answer to that question is not so simple as a casual thinker might suppose. Every fact has three aspects. There is first of all the fact itself—the actual thing that happened. Then there is the explanation of that fact ; and almost always the

description of the fact—the mere statement of it—involves an explanation. And thirdly there is the interpretation of the fact—the placing of it in its proper relation to the rest of our knowledge or experience. It is very difficult to separate the three elements. It is the hardest thing in the world to get back to bare or naked fact: for directly a fact enters into our consciousness, we have to put it into the form of thought or even words; and the moment we do this the process of explanation or interpretation has commenced. The new experience that has come to us can be articulated in our thought only by describing it in terms or by analogies which are already familiar to us, and in doing this we inevitably put our own construction and interpretation upon it. We have, therefore, necessarily to distinguish as far as possible between the facts themselves and the meaning which we or others may consider the facts to represent.

This principle may be illustrated from historical research. Lord Clarendon and Thomas Carlyle had almost exactly the same facts before them when they told the story of the overthrow of the Stuarts—but the portraits that they paint of Oliver Cromwell are diametrically opposed to each other. The one looks at history through the eyes of a Royalist, the other through the eyes of a Puritan. When a historian is something more than a mere annalist (and it is difficult to find one who is not), he is bound to put his own interpretation upon the facts which form the bases of his record. That is why Froude

compared history to a child's box of letters, which can be made to spell anything we please.

It will not, therefore, always be plain sailing when we come to deal with the facts of religious experience —even when those facts belong to the region of history. We shall never be exempt from the necessity of distinguishing between the facts themselves and the interpretation that has been given to them. When we come, for instance, to an examination of the account in the Gospel narratives of the impression which Jesus made upon His contemporaries, we shall be confronted at once by the problem raised by the miracles of exorcism. These miracles afford an excellent illustration of the distinction which has been drawn between (a) the fact, (b) the explanation of the fact, (c) its interpretation.

The original fact is easily obtained in this particular case. A man is cured of some mental disease. That is the underlying naked fact. But the fact is not left bare and naked in the records. An attempt is made to explain how the cure was wrought. The illness was due, it is urged, to demonic possession, and in order to effect the cure Jesus expelled the evil spirit. That is the explanation of the fact. But why was the exorcism possible ? You cannot enter into a strong man's house and steal his goods unless you first of all bind the strong man. It follows, therefore, that Jesus had obtained the mastery over Satan and his emissaries. That is the interpretation of the fact. Now it is perfectly obvious that in these narratives the facts have been inter-

preted in the terms of first-century thought, and that modern medical knowledge would give a very different explanation of them. The first century thought about illness in terms of demons, whereas we think of it in terms of bacteria.

It is clear, therefore, from what has been said that the historical judgments of the first-century writers will always need critical examination and may often have to be revised in the light of modern knowledge.

What is true of the historical facts becomes all the more essential when we deal with the psychological facts of spiritual experience. There is clearly more opportunity in this region for the mind to interpret its feelings and emotions in the light of its preconceptions. It is possible for a man to have a great spiritual experience and to misinterpret it completely, and it is also possible for him to draw theological deductions from it which the facts do not warrant. It is a common thing for doctrines based upon psychological data to exceed the limits of true inference.

There are traces of this tendency even within the New Testament itself. We may take as an example of this the well-known passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews. "It is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift . . . and have fallen away, to renew them unto repentance, since they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame."[1] This statement has always

[1] Heb. vi. 4–6.

occasioned difficulty, and many attempts have been made to evade its clear meaning. The favourite method of drawing the sting of the principle here enunciated is to lay the stress on the tense of the infinitive or the participle.[1] But that is an unsatisfactory way out of the difficulty because it robs the words of the significance which, as we know from a parallel passage in a later chapter of the Epistle,[2] the writer intended to be attached to them. The real explanation of the passage seems to me to be that it is an exaggeration of a very common experience. Everybody knows that cases of relapse are very difficult to deal with. When the religious emotion has once been aroused and has died down again, it is very difficult to kindle it anew. John Wesley says in his Journal: "From the terrible instances I have met with in all parts of England, I am more and more convinced the Devil himself desires nothing more than this, that the people of any place should be half-awakened and then left to themselves to go to sleep again. Therefore I determined by the Grace of God not to strike one stroke unless I could follow up the blow." And on another occasion he writes again: "I was more than ever convinced that the preaching like an Apostle, without joining together those that are awakened and training them in the ways of God, is only begetting children for the murderer. . . . The consequence is that nine in ten of the once awakened

[1] Thus ἀνακαινίζειν has been rendered "keep on renewing."

[2] x. 26, *seq.*

are faster asleep than ever." The experience of John Wesley must have been common in the Apostolic age.

The problem of the lapsed baffled the heart and the intellect of the Church. What wonder is it that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews drew from his own bitter experience the theological inference that the restoration of the lapsed was an impossibility! His statement is a generalization—a too hasty and absolute generalization—from the experience of the Church. It is an illustration which proves how easy it is for psychological fact to pass into theological dogma. Psychologically the statement is in accordance with almost universal experience; but whether it is legitimate to harden a psychological truth into a theological dogma must be regarded as at any rate open to question.

The doctrine of Predestination affords us another example of the same intellectual process. Assuming that Augustine and Calvin are right in their interpretation of the statements on the subjects which the Apostle Paul makes in his Epistle to the Romans, the question at once arises: What connexion is there between St. Paul's religious experience and his doctrine of Predestination, and is the latter a fair and legitimate deduction from the former?

Now, of course, it may be argued that the doctrine of Predestination passed into the Pauline theology from Pharisaism, and that it is the survival of a belief which he held in conjunction with his co-religionists in his pre-Christian days. But the

famous *locus classicus* in the eighth chapter of Romans (vv. 31 *seq.*) does not read like the otiose survival of an earlier faith. It is far too vigorous and virile to be merely a relic of the past. We can be sure that the doctrine of Predestination would not have occupied the place it does in Pauline thought unless there had been a religious experience behind it. And the experience was surely this. Paul felt that even from his mother's womb his life had been shaped and moulded by the Divine hand. The initiative had always come from God. To use his own graphic phrase, he had been " apprehended by Christ Jesus."[1] He had been selected as a chosen vessel of the Lord. His whole career was under the sway of the Spirit of God. He was swept onwards as with a flood. Time after time his own plans were overruled and thrust aside; he was forbidden by the Holy Spirit; " the spirit of Jesus " suffered him not. The Divine urge was upon him and he could do no other than obey its behests. The doctrine of Predestination in its original form was an attempt to explain the Divine initiative in human life—the Divine impact which captures the personality and subdues it to the Will of God. We all recognize with Shakespeare that

> There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough hew them as we will;

and when that conviction is fired by a great spiritual passion, it is quite easy for it to pass over into a

[1] Philipp. iii. 12.

doctrine of Predestination. The doctrine of Predestination as it was taught by Augustine and Calvin is simply another case where a great spiritual experience has been hardened into a theological dogma.

Since spiritual experience is capable of being misunderstood, and since, moreover, it can be construed and interpreted only in the language and thought-forms of its age, it will be necessary for us to discover some criteria by which it becomes possible for us to distinguish between a real experience and one that is merely imaginary, and between a true interpretation of that experience and one which goes beyond the warrant of the facts.

Now it will not do for us to take our own personal experience of Christ and use it as a standard or norm by which we pass judgment upon the experience of the Apostles in the New Testament, or of the saints in the history of the Church. It is not for us to say that because we may not have realized the redemptive experience or the experience of mystical communion with Christ as vividly as did the Apostle Paul, his experience has been exaggerated in the New Testament. There is another explanation. It may be that our capacity for spiritual experience is not as great as his. There is as infinite a variety of spiritual capacity as there is of intellectual capacity. There is a genius for spiritual experience as there is for art or music or poetry. Some souls can soar into the empyrean, while others cleave to the dust of earth. It is not for the earthbound souls

to question or doubt, because of their own incapacity, the experience of those more gifted spirits who are able to pass through the veil of sense and enter into the Holy of Holies. And though, without some experience of our own, we shall be like blind men trying to study astronomy or deaf men striving to appreciate an oratorio, we must not use this experience as a gauge for testing the validity of the vision of Christ which has come to men with finer souls than ours. We must not, to use Charles Kingsley's phrase, " squint through our tiny loopholes and think broad heaven is but the patch we see."

William James suggests three criteria for appraising the value of religious experience, viz. *immediate luminousness*, *philosophical reasonableness*, and *moral helpfulness*;[1] but he lays the main stress on the third, quoting by way of illustration the arguments by which St. Teresa answered the critics who alleged that her visions were only the creation of a disordered imagination or the work of the Devil : " the result of mere operations of the imagination is but to weaken the soul. Instead of nourishment and energy she reaps only lassitude and disgust : whereas a genuine heavenly vision yields to her a harvest of ineffable spiritual riches, and an admirable renewal of bodily strength. . . . I showed them [my critics] the jewels which the divine hand had left with me : they were my actual dispositions. All those who knew me saw that I was changed . . . this improvement, palpable in all respects, . . . was brilliantly

[1] *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 18.

evident to all men." This argument is often criticized as being mere pragmatism, but it has its justification in the pages of the New Testament. For the problem of the criteria goes back to the Apostolic age. One of the difficulties of the early Church was to find some test to distinguish the true and genuine manifestations of the Spirit from the spurious and false, and the most reliable standard of judgment that was found was the practical test by results. "If the early Christians always looked out for the proofs of the Spirit, and of power, they did so from the standpoint of their *moral* and *religious* energy, since it was for the sake of the latter object that these gifts had been bestowed upon the Church."[1] And they had, of course, the authority of Christ Himself for using the criterion: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father."[2] "By their fruits ye shall know them."[3] The Apostle Paul defines the test still more exactly in the words, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control."[4]

But though the pragmatic test is extremely useful for practical purposes, and though, when high moral results follow, it may generally be presumed that the experience which is said to have produced them is genuine, yet this rule of thumb method is not

[1] Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, Eng. trans., I., p. 258.
[2] Matt. vii. 21. [3] Matt. vii. 16.
[4] Gal. v. 22, 23.

sufficient by itself to guarantee the interpretation of the experience or even the special form which it is said to have assumed, since that may be the product of a predisposing environment. If St. Teresa had been brought up as a Puritan instead of a Roman Catholic, her religious experience would have been none the less real, though it would have been expressed in different terms, and might very well have seemed to the casual observer to belong to a different type altogether. If, therefore, we are to follow the scientific method we must seek for some more exact criteria.

The other two criteria of James do not help us very much. "Immediate luminousness" taken by itself is no sure guarantee of reality, since nothing is more luminous than hallucination. And "philosophical reasonableness" does not carry much conviction, since there are so many types of philosophy in existence, and it would be very difficult to find any form of experience which could not be fitted into some philosophical framework or other.

Perhaps the best canon we shall be able to find for estimating the objective reality of Christian experience is the range of its prevalence. When the experience of an individual Christian is verified and vindicated by similar experiences which are found to be of common occurrence in the history of Christianity, then we are justified in deeming that it is genuine and authentic. Every new experience of a similar kind is an additional verification of its

validity. If St. Paul's account of his conversion in the seventh chapter of Romans stood alone, and if there had never been anything like it in the subsequent history of the Christian Church, we might have had some justification for questioning its truth and asking whether it was a true transcript of what actually took place in the interior of his soul. But when Paul's story is corroborated by the classical parallel cases of an Augustine, a Luther, a John Wesley, and a Bunyan, to say nothing of countless others who have not had the literary capacity to describe the process of their transformation, though it was equally vivid and real, we feel at once that Paul's claim need not be challenged, since it has been vindicated in the common experience of the Church.

Moreover, if all the cases of one particular type of experience occurred in a particular age or a particular country or a particular religious society, we might have some grounds for supposing that there was something in the atmosphere of the times, or in the social and religious environment, which fostered, if it did not create, the special form which the experience assumed. The circumstances of the time and of the place might be held responsible for the shape and mould in which it was cast. That such local and temporal forms of experience do occur cannot, of course, be denied, and each must be treated on its own merits. But the more valuable types are those which are most common, and which cannot be said to be produced by the *Zeitgeist* of any

particular century or the racial characteristics of any particular people.

A second canon which will prove of immense value to us in our enquiry can be obtained by asking the question, *What is the religious experience which Jesus Himself led us to expect?* We are here concerned not so much with what Jesus says about the relationship between men and God as with His indications of the relationship that ought to exist between His followers and Himself, and of the results that would ensue. (1) There is evidence from the Gospel records that He felt that the relationship would not be confined to the activity and influence of His earthly life, but that after His death He would still be a present reality in the experience of His followers. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world": "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit": "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."[1] It is evident, therefore, that the mystical experience of the presence of Christ in the life of His disciples finds its justification in the actual words and promises of Jesus Himself. (2) He claims to have revealed the heart of God to men, as no other had or could. "No one knoweth the Father except the Son and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."[2] There is a foundation,

[1] Matt. xxviii. 20; John xv. 5; Matt. xviii. 20.
[2] Matt. xi. 27; John xiv. 9.

therefore, in the teaching of Jesus itself for the later experience that it is through the impact of Jesus and the revelation which He has given that the soul of man finds its way to God. (3) In the parable of the lost sheep and the lost coin, and in the allegory of the good shepherd in the fourth Gospel, Jesus speaks of His redemptive activity and His quest for the salvation of sinful man. He tells us that He gives His life as a ransom for many, and sheds His blood upon the Cross that He may establish a new and better covenant between God and man. The experience of redemption is therefore rooted and based in the teaching and action of Jesus Himself. (4) He assures us that our contact with Him will ease the burden of life and restore peace and confidence to troubled hearts. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavily burdened, and I will give you rest."[1] And those words are the charter that guarantees the experience so well expressed in the words of Dante: "In His will is our peace." (5) He asserts that men will find in the moral ideal embodied in His teaching the true foundation of life, both for the individual and society. "He that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them shall be likened unto a wise man that built his house on the rock."[2] Here is the warrant for the religious experience of the multitudes who throughout the ages have felt that the greatest joy and moral uplift came to them when they strove to follow the teaching of Jesus to its utmost lengths. (6) Jesus assured His

[1] Matt. xi. 28. [2] Matt. vii. 24.

disciples that faith in Him enriched the life that now is, and made immortality certain in the life to come. "I have come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly." "This is eternal life that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." "In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you."[1] Here we have the promise which forms the basis of the experience that the advent of Christ into our lives enormously enhances their value—gives them an entirely new meaning and significance, and enables us to face death with triumphant courage and confidence.

These are some of the forms of religious experience which Jesus Himself declared would result from contact with Himself; and when the recorded experiences correspond and answer to the promises of Jesus, we have *primâ facie* grounds for believing not only in the possibility but even in the probability of the occurrence.

Then again Jesus Himself, according to the statements of the fourth Gospel, instituted a comparison between the relationship of the disciples to Himself and His own relationship to the Father. "As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world. . . . I pray for them that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us."[2] We should scarcely have dared to institute the parallel if Jesus had not done it for us, for it implies that all that God

[1] John x. 10; xvii. 3; xiv. 2. [2] John xvii. 18–21.

was to Jesus, Jesus is to His followers. Our material for understanding the inner life of Jesus is scanty, but there are occasions when the silence is broken and we are permitted to catch a passing glimpse of the complete communion of spirit that existed between Christ and God. The visions that came to Jesus at the Baptism and on the Mount of Transfiguration tear aside the veil, and reveal the intense reality of the spiritual fellowship with God which was the motive power and anchor of the faith of Jesus. All that God was to Jesus in His own religious experience, Jesus Himself becomes to the Christian—at least, this is the implication of His own teaching and the verdict of the great Christians of the first century who have recorded the story of all that Jesus was to them, in the pages of the New Testament. And even on the rare occasions when a shadow seems to fall across the faith of Jesus—as in the Garden of Gethsemane, for instance, and in the cry of dereliction upon the Cross—the shadow itself is a revelation and a comfort to those who in later times have had to tread with bleeding feet the *via crucis*.

But the parallel between the experience of Jesus and the experience of the Christian breaks down at one crucial point ; and because it breaks down there, it can never be regarded as the norm of an ideal relationship between God and man as he is. The point at which the parallel breaks down is to be found in the fact that in the experience of Jesus there is no consciousness of personal sin—for He is " holy,

guileless, undefiled, separate from sinners."[1] The consciousness of personal sin and the need of redemption has always been a primary factor in the experience which men have had of Christ. We may say, therefore, that while the inner consciousness of Jesus affords us ample evidence to justify the mystical experience of communion with God, it cannot, of course, provide an illustration of the other types of experience which involve a sense of sin and guilt and the demand for redemption. It must not, on the other hand, be argued—unless Jesus is merely human—that the absence of these elements from His consciousness proves that these experiences are an illusion and an unreality.

The criteria, therefore, which we shall be justified in using to test the validity of religious experience are: (1) What is the ethical effect that flows from it? (2) How far is the individual experience confirmed by the common experience of the Christian? (3) How far does the experience conform to what Jesus Himself led us to expect? (4) How far has the experience anything that answers to it in the consciousness of Jesus Himself? This last criterion, for reasons which have already been stated, cannot apply to the whole range of Christian experience, but is necessarily limited to a section of it.

The next question that emerges is, What are the sources from which our material is to be derived?

The primary source is obviously the New Testa-

[1] Heb. vii. 26.

ment, for the New Testament *is the record of the religious experience of the first three generations of Christians.*

It is often urged that the New Testament is the text-book of a Divine revelation, and so, of course, it is. But that revelation lies at the heart of a great experience. "Theology is the fruit of religion, and religion is life." The first part of the New Testament (as the books are arranged in the Bible) is devoted to an account of the impression which the historical Jesus produced upon the minds of His contemporaries. The second part (which consists of the Epistles) recounts the spiritual experience produced by Christ in the minds and souls of the second and third generations of Christians.

It is out of these two forms of experience that the theology of the Apostolic age was evolved. The spiritual experience, however, was not all of the same type. If we go to the author of the Epistle of James, for instance, with the question, "What is Christ to you?" we get the answer, "He is the embodiment of the Christian ideal—the revealer of the royal law of righteousness." If we go to the Book of Revelation with the same question, the reply comes, "He is the great Apocalyptic Hope of the future, who is destined to win the final victory over the power of Satan and set up the Kingdom of God on earth." The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, if he were approached with the same question, would couch his answers in terms of the Platonic philosophy and say, "Christ is the ideal

High Priest who has offered the ideal sacrifice in the ideal temple in the heavens." Paul, far more catholic than the others in his conception of Christ, would answer our question by saying, " Christ is all that the others have stated Him to be. He is revealer of a new and higher moral code. He is the hope of the future ages. He is the sacrifice which has been offered for the sins of the world. He is all these things and more : for in addition to all the rest He is the living present reality in Whom we live and move and have our being." " I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

The important thing about the New Testament experience is that it is primary and original. Without going so far as to assert that all subsequent experience is secondary and derivative, it is quite clear that the records of the first impact of Christ upon the minds and souls of men (partly because so much of it belongs to the realm of history) are of paramount importance for our investigation. In the later cases there is always the possibility that auto-suggestion may have played an important part in inducing, or at any rate in shaping, the form of the experience. In the original experience of the earliest generations of Christians there is much less room for the supposition (even when we pass into the region of the psychological experiences) that what happened was self-created. There was very little in the atmosphere of the age which could have accounted for the rich and varied spiritual experience of the Apostle Paul—though, of course, it must be

admitted that he described this experience, as he was bound to do (since no other course was open to him), in the language and thought-forms of his time. We shall, therefore, devote our investigation to an examination and an analysis of the original and primary experience in New Testament time ; with this foundation it is possible to elucidate and illustrate the different types of New Testament experience from the later history of the Church.

Dr. Dale, in a well-known passage of *The Living Christ and the Four Gospels*, maintains that even if the historical records of the life of Jesus were lost beyond recall, the later spiritual experience of the Church would be sufficient to authenticate the Christian Faith. "Imagine," he says, "that, by some inexplicable fatality, the last three years of our Lord's earthly life had sunk into abysses of silence and oblivion as deep as those in which nearly the whole of His years from childhood till He was thirty years old have been lost ; that the story of no miraculous work of mercy, the record of no word of power and comfort and grace, remained ; that we knew nothing of His temptation, His tears at the grave of Lazarus, His agony in Gethsemane ; that neither document nor tradition preserved the Sermon on the Mount, or His conversation with Nicodemus, or the parable of the sower, or the parable of the prodigal son, or the discourse which He delivered to His elect friends during the night in which He was betrayed ; imagine that we knew nothing more than this—that He was a great religious teacher, that He

had been crucified and that those who had loved Him believed that He had risen from the dead. If this were all we knew of His earthly history, the loss to the thought and life, the strength and joy of the Church, would, no doubt, be immeasurable. But it would still be possible to believe in Him as the Lord and Saviour of the world and to find in Him eternal life and blessedness. For *the experience of the Church through century after century would remain to bear witness to His power to redeem men of every country and every race and every age who trust in Him for redemption.* It would still be certain that, from the time His earthly friends had their last vision of Him to our own days, men of every description have discovered that when they speak to Christ, they do not speak into the air, but that He answers them, gives them peace of conscience, strength for suffering and for righteousness, and the immediate knowledge of God. . . . And so, if the books were lost which record the earthly life of Christ, my faith in Him as my Saviour from sin, the Lord of conduct, and the giver of eternal life would still rest on strong and immovable foundations : for my personal experience of His power and love is confirmed by the experience of sixty generations of Christian men " (pp. 40–41).

In the collection of the typical material of this later experience all is grist that comes to our mill. We must spread the net as wide as possible in our search for facts. The lives of the saints—the biographies of great Christians in all ages and countries from the early centuries to the twentieth

—great human documents like Augustine's *Confessions* and John Wesley's *Journal*, the writings of the Mystics, devotional literature such as the *Imitatio Christi* and the *Theologia Germanica*, the liturgies and prayer books of the Christian Church, the hymns sung in public worship in ancient and modern times, the history of great movements like the Reformation, the Evangelical Revival, and the Oxford Movement, the story of modern missions ; all these—and other sources too numerous for mention—are the quarries from which we may hew the stone for our building.

CHAPTER II

JESUS AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

THE first question that confronts us in the pursuit of the historical part of our investigation is this, "What impression did Jesus make upon the minds of His contemporaries during the course of His earthly life in Palestine? What did they think about Him, and what judgment did they form about His person and work?"

There is the utmost diversity in the answers that have been given to these questions in modern times. We have only to read such books as Weinel's *Jesus im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* or Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* to discover what a multitude of theories have been put forward in the attempt to find out how Jesus was regarded by the men of His own age. There have been some—for instance, Kalthoff and Drews and more recently Brandes—who have assured us that the Gospels are a fairy tale from beginning to end, that Jesus never lived at all, and that the story of His life is a work of fiction. There are others who assert that it was as a social reformer that Jesus made His greatest appeal to His contemporaries, and that it was the fervour of His message—"One is your

Father and all ye are brethren"—that won the heart of His nation. Then there is the interpretation of the Liberal and Modernist School, who think that the influence and the work of Jesus for those who knew Him best belonged to the prophetic type, and that they regarded Him primarily as a great moral teacher and a religious leader with the most profound insight. Over against this interpretation of Jesus stands the eschatological theory, which has been advocated with such earnestness by Johannes Weiss and Schweitzer, that it was the proclamation by Jesus of the Advent of the Kingdom, and the prophecy of His own speedy return to earth in glory, that first arrested the attention of those who became His followers. Moreover, on the more conservative side, there are still theologians who assume that the contemporaries of Jesus saw in Him all the divine attributes which have been ascribed to Him in the formulas of the Church and that the later definitions of the Nicene and Chalcedonian confessions were implicitly present in the faith of the first disciples; while there are others who find all the fundamental principles of the Evangelical doctrine of the Apostle Paul and his successors in the Gospel narrative.

There is no reason, however, why we should allow ourselves to be bewildered by the mass of these conflicting verdicts. Some of them have only to be stated to be rejected by sane scholarship. The two extremes may be lopped off at once. The mythical is simply an aberration of judgment. The portrait of Jesus in the Gospels cannot possibly belong to the

realm of fiction. The Evangelists were not literary artists. They had not the genius of a Sophocles or a Shakespeare or a Goethe. They were absolutely incapable of inventing out of their own imagination a great personality like that of Jesus. And it is altogether incredible to suppose that the figure of the Christ was accidentally precipitated by the fortuitous concourse of the atoms of the different philosophical and religious ideas that were in vogue at the time, though such a theory has been seriously propounded.

The *Zeitgeist* of the first century could never have evolved out of itself the ideals, to say nothing of the character, of Christ. The very last thing that can be said about Jesus is that He is the child of His age. Christianity is inexplicable apart from a historical founder. *E nihilo nihil fit.* It is a law of nature that every event must have an adequate cause, and no adequate cause to explain the origin of Christianity can be found apart from the Person of Christ.

The other extreme theories which attempt to find in the Gospels evidence to justify and demonstrate the truth of the Christological clauses in the creeds or the later doctrines of the Atonement must equally be set aside. The prime error of which these theories are guilty is that they start out with a preconceived idea which they read into the narrative, instead of allowing the narrative to speak for itself.

To say that the people of Galilee or even the first band of disciples were able to see in Jesus all that

He afterwards came to mean for Christian Faith is absurd. The faith could grow only as the experience grew, and the experience could reach its full stature only when the Cross and the Resurrection revealed the full tide of the spiritual forces which flowed from the Person of Christ. It is, therefore, unscientific to attempt to read into the Gospel records the later Christian experience, and the theological judgments derived from that later experience; such a method does not really serve the interest of a sound Christian Apologetic.

In our attempt, therefore, to find what were the real opinions which the contemporaries of Jesus formed about Him, we must strive to avoid this type of error. We must make our investigation on strictly historical lines. We must strive to avoid reading into the story the results of our own bias or prejudices. We must let the Gospels speak for themselves. We must not try to impose our own views upon them. And this is not so easy a task as at first sight it appears to be. Every man inevitably finds in the Gospels the Christ of his own soul. We cannot bring to the task—nobody can—a mind that is a pure *tabula rasa*. In the study of history, as in every other sphere of knowledge, it is a well-known fact that the eye sees what it brings with it the power of seeing. It is impossible to eliminate the personal equation of the historian or the theologian. But it is something, at any rate, if we can approach the investigation with some appreciation of this difficulty in our minds. We can then be on our guard

against ourselves ; and this is the first requisite for the study of the New Testament. And we can strive to avoid the most obvious errors. We can endeavour to lay aside the mood of the apologist and to assume the *rôle* of a true historian.

It is, of course, to the Synoptic Gospels that we must go in our quest for material to enable us to answer the question, " What place did Jesus occupy in the thought of His contemporaries ? " since the statements of the fourth Gospel are so intermingled with unhistorical elements that it will need no little skill and critical acumen to make use of them in what sets out to be a rigidly scientific enquiry. The fourth Gospel contains invaluable evidence for determining the attitude of the third generation of Christians towards Jesus ; but it is much less useful when we are dealing with contemporary opinion, since it undoubtedly puts into the mouths of the followers of Jesus views and ideas which could have been derived only from later Christian experience.

And even in the case of the Synoptics, it is often asserted that we have in them the thought of the second generation of Christians rather than the verdict of the contemporaries of Jesus. We used to be told with much assurance that there are clear traces of the influence of Paulinism in Mark and Luke. But there has been much less confidence in this argument in recent times. It needs the use of a very powerful critical microscope to detect any real proof that the narrative in the Gospels has been

seriously influenced by later thought. It is the absence rather than the presence of Pauline thought that is the most remarkable feature about the Synoptics. The Gospels could not have been written till Paulinism was in full blast; Mark and Luke had been in intimate association with the Apostle and must have absorbed no little of his teachings. It would not have been surprising if they had introduced the Pauline ideas freely into their editorial notes, at any rate, and given a Pauline colour and tone to some of the sayings of Jesus. Their self-restraint, however, is beyond all praise. It cannot be said that in the narratives they interpret Jesus as Paul interpreted Him. Their keen sense of historical fact seems to have kept their theological predilections in complete abeyance. There is no ground at all for the assumption that in the Gospels we are looking at Jesus only through the eyes of His contemporaries.

Moreover, recent criticism, by its discovery of the sources that lie behind the Synoptic Gospels, has done much to confirm their historical value. If Canon Streeter is right in his assumption that the source Q was composed at Antioch about the year A.D. 50, and Mark at Rome about A.D. 60, the original nucleus of Luke at Cæsarea in A.D. 60, the original nucleus of Matthew in Jerusalem about A.D. 65, it means that the sources of our Gospels go back to a comparatively early date, and that the bulk of the narrative is therefore twenty, some of it thirty, years earlier than the date which used to be assigned to

Matthew and Luke, and at least ten years earlier than the conventional date given to Mark. Those twenty years make all the difference. If the main sources of our Gospels were reduced to writing between A.D. 50–65, many of the contemporaries of Jesus must have been still alive. The story, therefore, could have been challenged by men who knew the facts. Christianity was during this period subjected to bitter attack from the Jews. Before the end of the period the Neronian persecution had broken out. If there had been any substantial falsehood in the story as it was told by the first Evangelists, it is inconceivable that it would not have been exposed and held up to public scorn. The narratives were not written in a cloister and kept hidden till challenge had become impossible. They were produced in the fierce light that beat upon the new faith in Jerusalem, Cæsarea, Antioch, and Rome. If they could hold their ground in the face of the criticism of their opponents in the first century, we may be sure that in its main outline the narrative is unassailable.

Assuming, therefore, that we are justified in regarding the portraits of Jesus drawn by the Synoptic Evangelists as reliable and true to life in their main features, we can now proceed with our investigation. The use of the technical terms such as "Son of Man," "Son of God," "Messiah," has always been the subject of keen discussion among scholars. Our safest method will be to avoid as far as possible these debatable issues, and

to seek rather to gain an idea of the broad impression which Jesus made upon His contemporaries.

There are two chief questions which we must keep in mind: (1) What was there in Jesus that gave Him a unique value for the men of His day? (2) What attempts were made to explain the presence of these unique qualities in Jesus?

There are three types of opinion which we shall have to take into account in our investigation: (1) the verdict of the common people—especially the common people of Galilee at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus; (2) the verdict of His opponents—especially the ecclesiastical authorities of the time; (3) the verdict of those who knew Him best—and more especially His intimate friends and disciples.

To begin with the verdict of the people of Galilee. When Jesus first emerged from private life and gave the address in the synagogue at Capernaum which lifted Him at a single bound into a high place in the public esteem, we are told by Mark that the people who heard Him were so astonished that they began at once to debate the question among themselves: "What is this? A new teaching with authority! he issues his commands even unto the unclean spirits and they obey him" (i. 27). "They were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes" (i. 22). This last saying is repeated by Matthew in describing the effect produced by the Sermon on the Mount on the minds of those who listened to it (vii. 28, 29),

and by Luke in speaking of the influence of the teaching of Jesus in Capernaum immediately after the impressive address which He had delivered in the synagogue at Nazareth (iv. 32). All three Evangelists are, therefore, unanimous in stating that the people of Galilee felt instinctively from the first that a new type of teacher had arisen in their midst, whose words carried with them an authority and weight such as they had never felt before. He was quite different from the teachers to whom they were accustomed. *Their* claim for recognition came from their knowledge of precedents and the system of case-law which had grown up around the Jewish code. It was secondary and derivative. The authority of Jesus grew out of His own personality. Unfortunately Mark *suo more* gives no account at all of the address which Jesus delivered in Capernaum, and which evoked such a remarkable tribute from the people. But if it resembled the address which Luke makes Jesus deliver in the synagogue at Nazareth, we can understand the wonder of His audience. On that occasion Jesus took a roll of the prophet Isaiah, opened it at one of the great "servant"-passages, and read the words:

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> Because the Lord has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor:
> He has sent me to proclaim deliverance to the captives and receiving of sight to the blind,
> To set at liberty them that are bruised,
> To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord;

and then, when He had finished reading the passage, He made the audacious announcement, "To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears" (Luke iv. 18–21). There could be no mistaking the meaning of His saying. He claimed to be Himself the fulfilment of the great words of the prophet. What wonder is it that "the people marvelled at the words of grace that proceeded out of his mouth and said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?'" In any ordinary speaker such a claim would have sounded bombastic and absurd. Why was it that Jesus secured the sympathy of His audience? What was the secret of the authority which He wielded over the minds of men? That is the issue which is raised at the very outset of His ministry by the words and actions of Jesus.

The source of all real authority lies in personality. No position, or status, or rank, or office can confer it upon a man, unless it resides in himself. The Scribes and Pharisees possessed all these extraneous qualifications. If rank or office could have endowed them with authority, they would have possessed it to the full. Yet it was Jesus, Who was absolutely without any of these adventitious aids, Who had no rank or office or status of any kind, Who had just emerged from the life of an ordinary artisan—it was Jesus Who awoke in the minds of His listeners the feeling that it was He and not the others Who spoke with true authority and so had won the mastery of their souls. There was something in the personality of Jesus that captured their homage and

made them feel "Here is a man we can follow and obey."

But we must go a little deeper in our analysis. What is it that endows personality with authority? What is it that makes the utterances of some men so much more weighty and convincing than the words of others? Why do we place implicit trust in what some men say, while others exercise no influence over us at all? The first source of authority is knowledge. The man who knows always commands respect. The expert who is master of his subject compels our attention. We trust our lives to physicians and the disposition of our property to lawyers, because we are conscious that their knowledge exceeds our own, and that our health and our property will be safe in their hands. Now in the region of ordinary knowledge Jesus was not an expert. He was not a schoolman in any sense of the term. He knew little about the intricacies of the Jewish law—a sphere in which the Rabbis and the Scribes were always at home. But when it came to moral insight into the meaning of life and duty, it was felt universally that in this realm Jesus was supreme. He understood the real value of things. While other men were playing upon the surface, He went to the very heart of truth. When He spoke, men felt instinctively the truth of what He said. "Deep calleth unto deep." And Jesus undoubtedly touched a chord in the hearts of men which no one else could make vibrate. And His words were so audacious, too. "Ye have heard that it hath been

said "—" but I say unto you." Language such as this had never been heard in Palestine before. The universal belief among the Jews was that the law contained the final revelation of God. " The law of the Lord is perfect." In it God had spoken His last word to Israel. Nothing could be added to it, nothing must be taken from it. Dr. Charles, in describing the teaching of the Book of Jubilees, says : " Since the law was the ultimate and complete expression of absolute truth, there was no room for any further revelation : much less could any such revelation, were it conceivable, supersede a single jot or tittle of the law as already revealed."[1] And yet what the Book of Jubilees declares to be impossible, Jesus actually achieved in the Sermon on the Mount. He so expanded and altered the precepts of the Jewish code that He infused into them a new and higher significance. Moreover, He did this in a manner that was supra-prophetic. No prophet ever used the formula of Jesus, " *I* say unto you." The prophet begins his message with a " Thus saith the Lord," or he describes it as a vision which had come to him from God, or he uses the formula " The word of the Lord came unto me." He never asserts his own personal authority ; he never claims a personal right to change or modify moral practice or religious faith. It is only Jesus Who dares to set His personal authority over that of Moses by the use of the phrase, " I say unto you."

[1] *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, Vol. II, p. 9.

And yet the marvel is, that in spite of their prejudices, in spite of their belief in the absolute truth of the law, there was something about Jesus which made men instinctively feel that what in other men would have been regarded as arrogance and presumption —if not blasphemy—was in His case perfectly natural and legitimate. His message, in spite of the claims which He made for Himself, was self-authenticating.

The second most common source of authority is to be found in personal goodness. Character always tells. Saintliness always carries with it influence and weight. Some of the men who have left the greatest mark upon their age, have done so by sheer consecration of will-purpose, and by complete devotion to the highest ideals. There can be little doubt that part of the authority of Jesus was derived from His personal character. There is, of course, no trace of the later doctrine of the sinlessness of Jesus in the Synoptics, but that doctrine could never have been evolved—the Epistle of Peter could never have written of Jesus "who did no sin," nor could the Epistle to the Hebrews have described Him as "holy, guileless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," as "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin"[1] unless the facts had warranted the deduction. The world recognized in Jesus a man of "mirroring purity of soul," to use the famous phrase of Strauss, a man who had been completely victorious in the fight for virtue, a man whose moral

[1] 1 Peter ii. 22; Heb. vii. 26, iv. 15.

achievement had lifted him to the highest plane of life. The saintliness of Jesus belongs to a new type, a type to which the world was unaccustomed. There was no asceticism about it. Jesus was not a recluse like John the Baptist. He was not one of those " Carpet Knights " whose virtue is of the cloistered kind " that never sallies out and sees her adversary." His purity was not attained by withdrawal from the world. He lived the common life of men, He did not shrink from contact with the outcast and the sinner, and yet He kept His soul unsullied through it all.

A third source of authority is courage. Men will always listen with bated breath to a hero, even when he has nothing to say. Bravery always secures its meed of popular esteem ; and when it is displayed in the moral realm, its popularity is always enhanced. Men felt that in Jesus there was courage *in excelsis*. He never shrank from danger. He confronted the Pharisees with words that were like drawn swords. Herod Antipas had no terrors for Him. He was not deterred by the terrible fate that befell John the Baptist. Immediately after John's arrest, He took His life in His hands, and with an almost reckless daring stepped into the place that had been left vacant. Nothing ever daunted Him. " Fear not them who can destroy only the body," He said to His followers ; and it was that principle which governed all His conduct. And when the last fatal journey to Jerusalem began, " he strode on," to use Mark's vivid phrase, in front of His disciples, " and

they were amazed." He went to meet His doom in the mood of triumph; and if in the Garden of Gethsemane, His spirit wavered for a moment, it was not from lack of courage, but rather from the thought of what His Crucifixion involved for the destiny of His nation and the future of mankind. It was to no small extent because Jesus possessed the soul of a hero, that He made so strong an appeal to the men and women of His age.

A further source of authority is to be found in the power of service and sympathy. The public benefactor always secures a high place in the public esteem, and the greater the boon he is able to bestow upon the community, the higher is the regard in which he is held. It is impossible to exaggerate the service which Jesus rendered to the people. His works of healing and His sympathy for suffering humanity won for Him an immense and well-deserved popularity. Never before had such wonderful cures been wrought in Palestine. And in that age, when most forms of disease were ascribed to demon-possession, the miracles of Jesus possessed a religious significance which they do not bear for the modern mind.

It is necessary to admit quite frankly that there were some elements in the activity of Jesus which counted for much more to the men of Palestine than they do to us. The victory of Jesus over disease carried with it in the first century the conviction that He had obtained the mastery over the demonic forces and had triumphed over Satan

and all his emissaries. Even Jesus Himself seems to have shared in this belief. He claims to have "bound the strong man" before he spoiled his goods, and when the seventy returned from their mission He said to them, in effect, "I was watching you, and as I watched I beheld Satan fall like lightning from heaven." We must remember, however, that Apologetic is always relative to the age; and it does not really weaken the general conclusion reached by the contemporaries of Jesus when we discover that one of the arguments which seemed convincing to them no longer appeals in the same way to us to-day. It is only fair to the Synoptics to add that they do not base their case to any large extent on an appeal to the miraculous. And Jesus Himself invariably refused to work a miracle for a thaumaturgic display. It is only when we reach the fourth Gospel that miracles are pressed into service as a demonstration of the truth of Christianity. In the Synoptics they are always the outflow of the pity and compassion of Jesus. And altogether apart from the miraculous elements in the story, there is a redemptive element in the activity of Jesus which made a great impression upon His friends and enemies alike. Jesus deliberately set Himself to win the sinner and the outcast to a higher life. "I am not come to call righteous people but sinners." "The son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." The Pharisees and Scribes looked down with scorn upon "this people that knoweth not the law"; but Jesus saw

in each of them, beneath the ignorance and sin that defaced his life, a soul of infinite worth to God, and therefore worthy of the highest redemptive effort. It is this redemptive activity of Jesus that Claude Montefiore—one of the ablest and most sympathetic interpreters of the Gospels in modern times—regards as the most startling and original feature of His work. The ministry of Jesus "inaugurated a new idea: the idea of redemption, the idea of giving a fresh object of love and interest to the sinner, and so freeing him from his sin. The rescue and deliverance of the sinner through pity and love and personal service—the work and the method seem both alike due to the teacher of Nazareth."[1] There can be no doubt that the miracles and the redemptive service of Jesus made a tremendous appeal to the age in which He lived.

The last source of authority, and probably the greatest, is derived from contact with the Divine. The man who lives a life of intimate communion with God will always make a strong appeal to his fellows. That has been the secret of the influence of the Mystics in all the ages. The seer who can come down from the mountain-top of vision, where he has looked into the face of God, will always command reverence and respect, though his message may be unpopular. There is no doubt that Jesus possessed this power in a unique degree. He spoke of God with a knowledge and a familiarity hitherto unknown. He unveiled for men the face of the

[1] *The Religious Teaching of Jesus*, p. 58.

Father. It may be that the saying recorded in the fourth Gospel, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," represents the result of later reflection; but that seems to have been the impression which the words of Jesus left upon the minds of His hearers. There grew up an instinctive feeling that in some wonderful and inexplicable way Jesus brought men nearer to the heart of God, and brought God nearer to the hearts of men. We need not attempt to analyse the theological implications involved in the teaching of Jesus about God, nor is it necessary for us to discuss the problem as to what was new in His revelation; it is enough for us to recognize the fact that Jesus in a unique manner brought the sense of the Divine presence and the Divine Fatherhood and the Divine love into the lives of men. When He uttered the words, "No man knoweth the Son except the Father, neither does anyone know the Father except the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him," He was only putting into language what seems to have been the general impression produced by His teaching. And even if these words, as some scholars tell us to-day, are not an authentic utterance of Jesus Himself, but rather the judgment of the author of one of the sources of our Gospels, they are not necessarily of no value for us to-day; for in that case they represent a very early verdict of the Church—a verdict which the whole tenour of the Gospel narrative seems abundantly to justify.

It was the cumulative effect of all these causes—

the moral authority displayed by Jesus, to begin with, then the saintliness of His character, then His heroic fortitude in the face of danger, then His miracles and the high service He rendered to mankind in His redemptive activity, and last of all His unique God-consciousness—it was the cumulative effect of all these in combination, that raised in the minds of the contemporaries of Jesus the problem of the interpretation of His person.

It was not only the people of Nazareth who asked the question, "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these miracles? Is he not the son of the carpenter?" Many others besides must have "wondered at the words of grace that proceeded from his mouth." We know from the answer which Peter gave to the question of Jesus, "Who do men say that I am?" that there was much debate upon the nature of His personality and that many theories were propounded. "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."[1] It is noteworthy that, in their attempt to find an explanation of Jesus, the people fell back upon some hero of the past; the recent past in the case of John the Baptist, the more remote past in the case of the other prophets. In every case it is a prophet *redivivus*—a prophet miraculously returned from the dead—with whom Jesus is identified in the popular esteem. It seems, therefore, to have been generally recognized by the populace that no ordinary category or term was adequate to describe

[1] Matt. xvi. 14.

Jesus. To introduce the idea of a prophet *redivivus* is to go outside the range of ordinary nomenclature and seek a supra-natural term. The verdict of the people of Galilee, therefore, seems to have been that there was something so extraordinary about Jesus that He could not be described in the common terms in general use : only a supra-natural category could fittingly appraise His value.

The next question which we have to ask ourselves is, What did the opponents of Jesus say about Him ? Does their testimony endorse, or contradict, the verdict of the people ? The critics of Jesus play a great part in the Gospel narrative. The most prominent of them were drawn from the ranks of the Scribes and the Pharisees. The charges they brought against Jesus were of many kinds. We are not so much concerned with the judgments they passed upon Him. We naturally expect to find them hostile. The only interest they have for our enquiry is in the bearing they have upon the character of the general opinion about Jesus that prevailed at the time.

The first attack occurs very early in the public ministry of Jesus, and is connected with the cure of a paralytic. The sick man was let down through the roof by his devoted friends, since all other means of approach to Jesus were barred by the crowds who thronged the door of the house. Jesus, to the amazement of all the bystanders, instead of speaking the word of healing, said to the paralytic, " Thy sins are forgiven thee." These words at once roused

the anger of some Scribes who were present in the audience. "Why does this man speak like this?" they said. "He is blaspheming. Who can forgive sins except God alone?"[1] The charge thus brought against Jesus is a valuable piece of evidence in illustration of the redemptive character of His work. We need not suppose that He was making a divine claim or usurping divine authority. The motive was probably quite different from that. The story in the opening chapter of Mark suggests that the demand for miracles of healing had become so great that it threatened to absorb all the energies of Jesus and divert Him from the prophetic work—which seems at this time to have been the chief purpose of His ministry. "Let us go elsewhere, into the next villages, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth."[2] The words of Jesus to the paralytic represent an attempt by a swift dramatic stroke to teach the world that the main purpose of His mission was not the healing of the body but the cure of the soul. His primary aim was not so much the conquest of disease as the conquest of sin. The utterance which provoked the opposition of the Scribes was not an irrelevance and a paradox, much less was it an assumption of a divine prerogative; it was rather a definite proclamation, made in the most dramatic fashion, of what Jesus regarded as the chief function in His public ministry.

Again, when the opponents of Jesus brought the charge against Him that He was working miracles

[1] Mark ii. 7. [2] Mark i. 38.

by the power of Beelzebub, it is perfectly obvious that they felt the works of Jesus were of such an extraordinary character that there must be some supra-human power behind Him. The only mistake they made lay in the supposition that this power came from an evil source. Both the friends and the enemies of Jesus seem, therefore, to have agreed in thinking that the miracles of Jesus could be explained only on the supposition that He was the agent and vehicle of some higher personality—in other words, that they were supra-natural in their origin; they differed only in their theory of the identity of the personality who worked through Him and enabled Him to achieve such marvellous results. Neither friend nor foe seems to have been willing to admit that mere human causation was sufficient to account for the facts.

The charges which were so often brought against Jesus, that He was guilty of breaking the law of the Sabbath and that He did not enforce upon His disciples the duty of fasting, or of ritual washing before meals, illustrate the fact that Jesus sat loosely to the traditions and ceremonies of the Jewish law, and felt it His duty to modify and spiritualize the customs and practices of the time. When, in reply to His critics, Jesus said, "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath," He claimed the right to determine for Himself what was involved in the keeping of the commandment that sanctified the Sabbath day. He definitely set His own authority above that of the recognized tradition of the past

and the conventional interpretation of the Rabbinical schools, and He refused to be bound by the decisions of the Scribes and Pharisees. In fact, on all these issues He challenged the Pharisaic system of religion, on the ground that it kept the letter but lost the spirit of the moral ideal in the Jewish law, that it "strained out the gnat" in its adhesion to precision of detail, but "swallowed the camel" in its neglect of the higher principles of truth and righteousnesss. The critics of Jesus, in bringing these accusations against Him, bear out the verdict of the people that "he spoke with authority and not as the scribes."

The redemptive activity of Jesus is also illustrated by the taunt that was so often levelled against Him by His opponents, that He was "a friend of publicans and sinners." It was this charge which drew from Jesus the great pronouncement, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." The enemies of Jesus, of course, put the worst construction upon the conduct of Jesus, and hinted broadly that a man is known by the company that he keeps. But the fact that they attributed unworthy motives to Him does not in the least degree detract from the value of the corroboration which the charge affords of the real character of the activity of Jesus.

Among the accusations brought against Jesus before Pilate was the charge that He was guilty of high treason, since He had claimed to be the King of the Jews. There can be little doubt that, though

the charge was a wicked perversion of the facts, there was some kind of justification for it: only it was not in the political but in the moral sphere that Jesus had claimed the right to exercise authority. He had proclaimed the advent of the Kingdom of Heaven, and had definitely reserved the supreme *rôle* for Himself in its establishment. The substratum of fact that underlies the charge is a valuable confirmation of the main thesis in the teaching of Jesus and of the authoritative position He assumed for Himself.

Taken as a whole, therefore, it may be said that the verdict of the opponents of Jesus unwittingly verifies the impression which the evidence shows that He made upon the people, as we have already seen.

We now come to the third and most important point in this connexion—the verdict of the disciples. It was the disciples who came into closest contact with Jesus, and who, because they knew Him best, were most qualified to speak about the character of His person and work. It has been said that "Jesus lived to make twelve men, that He might leave twelve men behind Him after the Crucifixion to carry on the work of the Kingdom;" and though the statement would be a gross exaggeration if it were intended to be an exhaustive account of the mission of Jesus, it does emphasize the importance which Jesus attached to the task of training His disciples for the great work that lay before them in later times.

The disciples recognized the greatness of Jesus from the first. The fourth Gospel is probably right in asserting that some of them had previously been followers of John the Baptist. They were men, however, who could serve only the highest that they knew—and they seem to have felt instinctively that in Jesus they had a far more powerful leader than in John. It was not that they saw in Him the Messiah from the first. The fourth Gospel is certainly wrong upon that point, though its error admits of a very simple psychological explanation.

Memory often plays strange tricks with us, and we do not always keep the various stages of mental development clearly before our minds. It is quite easy for us to antedate an opinion or a decision in our own consciousness, and to claim that we have always held a certain intellectual position, though if we were to stop to analyse the history of our mental processes, we should find that that particular conviction came to us only at a much later point than we generally assumed. It is quite conceivable that the disciples themselves in later times may have unconsciously transferred the faith that came to them at Cæsarea Philippi to the moment of their first contact with Jesus, and that this later mode of thinking may have been embodied in the traditions that lie behind the opening chapters of the fourth Gospel. But be that as it may (and we have no particular necessity to defend the historical accuracy of the fourth Gospel), it is quite certain that the

disciples from the first must have recognized the supremacy of Jesus as a leader. Otherwise, they would not so readily have responded to His call on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Men do not abandon their ordinary avocations of life to follow a prophet, unless he has first of all won their loyalty and allegiance. They must have seen in Jesus something that they saw in no other, before they gave up everything to follow Him. We know from the statements of the Gospels that the demands which Jesus made of those who wished to become His disciples were severe and exacting. He laid down a stringent rule that the claims of the Kingdom must be paramount, and all other interests in life must be subordinated to them. He told men to count the cost before they joined the ranks of His intimate disciples. He never disguised the fact that they would have to endure hardship and persecution. They would have to drink the cup of suffering and be baptized with the baptism of tragedy. And yet, in spite of this unattractive prospect, in spite of the gathering storm of unpopularity, in spite of the hatred of Herod Antipas, and in spite of the attacks of the ecclesiastical authorities of the day, eleven of the little band of disciples remained faithful to their master to the end, and only one of them, the traitor Judas, failed to stand the test. The highest word of praise that Jesus bestowed upon them is found in the words preserved by Luke, " Ye are they who have continued with me in my trials " (xxii. 28). Such was the devotion and the loyalty which the person-

ality of Jesus kindled in the hearts of His most intimate friends! It was not difficult, perhaps, to be a disciple amid the glamour of the popularity which attended the early months of the public ministry of Jesus. But the disillusionment which came so swiftly, and shook the soul of Jesus Himself, must have undermined the faith of any but the most confident of His followers. As the disciples listened to the parables of disillusionment—the parable of the sower and the parable of the tares, which seem to have burst out of the torn heart of their Master as it smarted under the bitter sense of failure—and as it was borne in upon them that all hopes of popular success were shattered beyond recovery, it needed something more than admiration and the sense of loyalty to keep the disciples from losing their faith. If it be argued that they hoped to the last that some supernatural event would extricate them from the *impasse* and secure their Master's triumph, that is only another way of saying that they saw in Jesus something which warranted their belief that a miracle would be wrought on His behalf, if not by Himself, which would completely overwhelm His enemies and secure Him the final victory. In any event, whether they cherished this hope or not, it is obvious that Jesus had obtained such an ascendancy over their minds that they were willing to face death for His sake.

We have no exact data to enable us to trace the development of the faith of the disciples. All we can say is that the personality of Jesus grew upon them

as they lived in intimate intercourse with Him and watched His wondrous miracles and listened to His great utterances, until at last the conviction gradually formed itself in their minds which found expression in the confession of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi, that Jesus was the Messiah. The significance of Cæsarea Philippi cannot be exaggerated. It is the turning-point in the Gospel narrative. It seems to have been the event for which Jesus was waiting. After the confession of Peter His whole mood changes. He no longer seeks to evade the risk of martyrdom. He begins at once to speak of the fate that awaits Him. "He set His face to go up to Jerusalem." He seems to hail the Cross with a cheer.

If the confession of Peter had such a significance for Jesus, it has an equal significance for our enquiry. It means that the disciples had reached the conviction that only the highest term in the popular theological vocabulary of Judaism was sufficient to describe all that they saw in Jesus. At first they had called Him "Master" or "Teacher," but it had become obvious that such terms as these were set in too low a key. Jesus had produced such a unique impression upon their minds and souls, that a unique term was needed to give expression to their thought of Him. The confession of Peter, therefore, is the first great creative moment in the history of Christology.

Many attempts have been made in modern times to rob Cæsarea Philippi of its value and importance.

Some scholars, like Wrede for instance, have denied its historicity, and have argued that at this point the Gospel narrative reflects the influence of later thought. Such an assumption, however, is absolutely without warrant. The incident occurs in all three Synoptics, and is therefore as well authenticated as anything in the story of the life of Jesus. There are no valid grounds for setting it aside. To reject it is simply a *tour de force* of critical nihilism.

Another attempt to minimize its importance argues, with Lake and Foakes Jackson, that the term "Messiah" as used by Peter did not signify very much. We know that the word was used with many different connotations and that there was no uniform theology of the Messiah. In the *Psalms of Solomon*, for instance, the word is used of a great human deliverer of the lineage of David, who is to set up a great kingdom of which Palestine is to be centre. In the "Similitudes" of the *Book of Enoch*, on the other hand, the term is applied to a Divine figure who is seated on the heavenly throne by the side of the Ancient of Days. Lake and Foakes Jackson argue that it was only in the lower sense that the term was applied to Jesus by Peter. We have no material, of course, for determining what was in the mind of Peter. We can form no idea of the mental picture which the term conjured up before his mind. It is scarcely conceivable to suppose that he stopped to reflect upon the theological implications which were involved in the term

"Messiah." Such an analysis came only at a much later stage in the development of Christology. It is enough for our purpose to recognize the fact that the word Messiah (however it might be interpreted) was the highest term in the current theological vocabulary of the Jew, and that when that term was applied to Jesus it meant the recognition of the fact that He was the anointed of the Lord—the great messenger Whom God Himself had sent into the world for the fulfilment of His divine purpose.

But though we cannot analyse all the theological implications involved in Peter's confession at Cæsarea Philippi, we have some facts which enable us to appraise the attitude of the disciples to Jesus. We know, for instance, that they recognized to the full the wide gulf that separated Him from themselves; and that gulf consisted not merely in the genius of Jesus for leadership, or in His miraculous powers, or in His transcendent gifts as a teacher; it extended also to the moral sphere. There are indications that the disciples felt the spell of the moral grandeur of Jesus. "Depart from me," said Peter on one memorable occasion, "for I am a sinful man, O Lord."[1]

We can be sure, too, that the disciples recognized the supremacy of Jesus over all other teachers of the time, and felt that the difference between Him and them was a difference not merely of degree but also of kind. There is a very interesting parallel in the case of Gamaliel. The disciples of Gamaliel, like the

[1] Luke v. 8.

disciples of Jesus, felt that a new term was needed to express the affection they felt for their teacher, so they invented the title Rabban, or "our Master." But the disciples of Jesus felt that no simple modification of any ordinary title, such as was bestowed upon Gamaliel by his ardent admirers, was sufficient to express their devotion to Jesus. The difference between Gamaliel and his contemporaries was a difference of human genius; in the case of Jesus it was infinitely more than that. The vision of the Transfiguration suggests that to the minds of the disciples His only peers in history were the great figures of Moses and Elijah, and even they appear to have held lower rank.

It follows, too, that the disciples accepted without question all that Jesus claimed for Himself. We are not concerned here immediately with the self-consciousness of Jesus, except in so far as His own testimony formed part of the faith of the disciples. The disciples often heard Jesus describe Himself as "the son of man," though we cannot be sure about the meaning that either He or they attached to the phrase. They knew that He claimed a unique relationship to God and spoke of Himself as the Son of God *par excellence*. They welcomed His avowal that He would return and set up the Kingdom of Heaven. It does not seem to have amazed them at all when Jesus put Himself in the centre of the apocalyptic picture and made Himself the hero of the apocalyptic drama. The only thing they were anxious about was that places of honour might be

reserved for themselves when the great day came. They were not in the least surprised when Jesus described Himself as "greater than Solomon" or "greater than Jonah" or "greater than the temple." They felt that all such statements and claims were amply justified by the authority which Jesus displayed—authority over disease and the demons that produced it, authority over the powers of nature, and authority over the minds of men.

Nor was this high estimate of Jesus confined to the inner group of disciples alone. There were many others who were equally impressed by the greatness of His personality, though they were not able to give formal expression to their faith. The Roman Centurion, for instance, when he sent to ask the help of Jesus to cure his servant, paid Him great homage in the words, "I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof," and recognized that Jesus possessed an authority over disease similar to that which he himself exercised over the soldiers of his own regiment. "I have soldiers under me and I say to one, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh, and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it"—"You have only to speak the word and my boy will be healed."[1] And it was not only the power of healing that evoked this high tribute to Jesus. The woman who had been a sinner felt that she could express the devotion she felt to the man who had restored her to purity only by the costly

[1] Luke vii. ff. *seq.*

gift of the alabaster box of ointment, with which she anointed His head and feet.

It has sometimes been argued that the facts in the Synoptic gospels do not warrant us in assuming that Jesus was more than a great prophet—perhaps the greatest of the prophets—and that the other terms applied to Him belong to the language of adulation. There can be no doubt, of course, that the Hebrew prophet comes nearer to Jesus in type than any other kind of religious leader or philosopher. There was much which Jesus had in common with the prophet. When we read Dean Inge's description of the moral authority of the prophet in his book on *Faith and Its Psychology*,[1] we recognize at once that very much of it applies to Jesus. The prophet can only "commend his message to us by awaking a response in our own hearts. This is in reality the only way in which a revelation is, or can be, made to us. The revelation comes to us with authority from outside as the voice of God. The true prophet at any rate believes sincerely that God is speaking through his mouth; and those who hear him are constrained to believe it too. Our hearts leap out to meet his words; we recognize that this is what we wanted; that here is a truth which we could not find for ourselves. . . . We recognize in the prophet himself a man of God. We trust him instinctively; when he speaks to us about the unseen world we feel that he knows what he is speaking about, that he 'has been there' himself."

[1] p. 81.

All this is true of Jesus: every word in Dean Inge's description describes the impression which Jesus made on the minds of men. And yet the contemporaries would have completely endorsed Dean Inge's conviction: "When we read the words of Jesus Himself, our hearts tell us that even this language is inadequate."

CHAPTER III

THE FAITH OF THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

CHRISTIANITY started on its career with a very simple creed, "Jesus is the Messiah"; but before a single generation had passed away it gave Jesus a place by the side of God and the Holy Spirit, in the Benediction which Paul wrote at the end of his second Epistle to the Corinthians. The problem which we have to face in the present chapter is, therefore, "How did the first simple Christian creed develop into the Benediction?" or, in other words, what were the causes which gave to Jesus the value of God for Christian experience and thought?

It is, of course, perfectly obvious that the first simple creed could not be a permanent and adequate expression of Christian faith. The term "Messiah" itself, as we have seen, was a word of indeterminate meaning and might be used with many different connotations. It was too fluid a word to be a final statement or criterion of Christian belief. Its very ambiguity made a further definition absolutely essential. What George Eliot has called "the divine right to general haziness" may be a common

characteristic, and is often a belauded characteristic of the modern Church ; but it is quite certain that the Church of the Apostolic age did not and could not have achieved its triumph with a creed of dubious meaning that was capable of many contradictory interpretations. Clarity of thought was necessary if Christianity was to maintain its own unity and make its appeal to the intellect of its age.

Moreover, there was a further difficulty. The term Messiah was a technical Jewish expression, consecrated by long usage in the history of the past, and therefore perfectly familiar to Jewish minds, even though its exact significance was uncertain. But when Christianity began to spread beyond the borders of Jewry and enter into the Greek world, the word was almost unintelligible, and certainly conveyed no clear meaning to the mind. It was necessary, therefore, to translate it into an equivalent term which would be intelligible to the thought of Greece and Rome. Fortunately an alternative expression had already come into use in the Jewish communities—the term "Lord." The proof that this word is primitive and originated within the circle of Jewish Christianity is to be found in the existence of the Aramaic phrase *Maranatha*,[1] which, as we know from 1 Corinthians xvi. 23, was one of the watchwords of the early Christian Church. The occurrence of this Aramaic term disproves conclusively the theory of Bousset and many other

[1] *Marana* (our Lord) *tha* (come !).

modern writers that the word "Lord" passed into Christianity from pagan usage, and was applied by Gentile Christians to Jesus just as it was applied to Serapis and Osiris in the terminology of the "mystery" cults.

But though the term "Lord" served its purpose in enabling the early Christian missionaries to make their faith intelligible to non-Jewish minds, it did not solve the problem of finding an adequate category to describe the person of Jesus—for it, too, was a word of ambiguous meaning. It might be used, for instance, as it was used in the Septuagint, to render into Greek the ineffable name of God; or as it was used in the Pagan cults as the appellation of Serapis or Osiris; or as it was applied to a Roman Emperor when he was designated *dominus et deus*; or it might, on the other hand, be the mode of address used by a slave in speaking to his master or by any inferior in talking to his superior. It was capable, therefore, of bearing a very high or a very commonplace connotation, and might consequently be used in very different senses when it was applied to Christ.

The two alternative forms of the earliest Christian creed afterwards coalesced in the common formula which came into general use during the first Christian generation—"Our Lord Jesus Christ"—a formula which is a condensed expression, signifying "Jesus Who is the Jews' Messiah and the Gentiles' Lord"—or more simply, perhaps, "Jesus Who is both our

Messiah and our Lord." The combination suggests that both terms ought to be construed in the highest sense. The one guarantees the other and makes it more difficult for the lower interpretation to be placed upon it.

But in addition to these simple credal statements, we have, in the opening speeches of Peter as they are recorded in Acts, further evidence that bears upon the character of primitive Christology. It cannot be maintained, of course, that these speeches contain the *ipsissima verba* of the speeches delivered by Peter on the day of Pentecost and before the Jewish Sanhedrin. But it is equally certain, from the style and from the primitive nature of the theology, that these speeches could not have been the free composition of the historian putting into the mouth of the Apostle, in the manner of Thucydides, an address which he considered appropriate to the occasion. There are clear indications that the early chapters of Acts are based upon older material; and in the absence of any contradictory evidence we may presume that these sources contained a primitive and reliable account of the main lines of argument followed by Peter in his first attempts to defend the Christian faith. In these addresses Jesus is described as "a man proved to have come from God by the miracles, wonders, and signs which God wrought through Him."[1] He was raised to the rank of divinity by God—as is clearly implied in the phrase "Him God made (ἐποίησεν) both Lord and

[1] Acts ii. 22.

Christ."[1] The first crude and rudimentary thought about Jesus, therefore, seems to have regarded Him as a man Who was endowed by God with miraculous powers and anointed by Him to be Messiah and Lord. His death upon the Cross was part of the divine programme for Him, since the Cross was the result of the " determinate plan and foreknowledge of God "[2] and fulfilled the prophecy of the " suffering Servant."[3] He was raised from the dead by the power of God, and has been exalted to a place at His right hand on the throne in heaven. He is destined to return to the world as a triumphant Messiah, to establish the Kingdom of God upon earth.[4] Whether we are justified in applying the later technical term *Adoptionist* to this type of Christology may, perhaps, be a debatable point; but it seems quite certain that it grew out of the same basic ideas which afterwards developed into the Adoptionist theory.

Christianity, therefore, commenced its course with a simple creed and a crude quasi-Adoptionist interpretation of Jesus. How was it that within thirty years it reached the faith that found expression in the Benediction, which placed Jesus in the same rank with God and the Holy Spirit ?

This is the battleground of modern criticism, and it is on this battleground that the war between orthodox Christianity and the more radical theories of recent times is waged most fiercely, The issue may be stated thus : " Is the Benediction a legitimate

[1] *ib.* ii. 36. [2] *ib.* ii. 23. [3] *ib.* iii. 18. [4] *ib.* iii. 21.

development of the first creed, or is it an exaggeration and a complete misinterpretation of the Christian facts? What justification was there for the apotheosis of Jesus? How was it that Jesus came to have the value of God for the Christian Church?"

The trend of criticism in modern times has been to attempt to find an answer to these questions by supposing that the development was the result of the impact of Græco-Roman thought upon the Christian facts. In the *Beginnings of Christianity*, for instance, Foakes Jackson and Lake declare that "The claim of Christianity to be a 'faith once delivered to the Saints' cannot bear the scrutiny of the historian of religions. To him it appears not a single religion but a complex of many, justified in claiming the name of Christianity by reason of the thread of historic continuity which runs through and connects its component parts."[1] More particularly it was "a synthesis between Judaism and the Græco-Oriental thought of the Empire."[2] Now every sane student of the history of Christianity, since the days of Edwin Hatch, has been prepared to admit that the original organism of the Christian faith was affected and in some ways modified by the action of the environment in which its early life developed. That to-day is an accepted fact which is regarded as axiomatic. The real issue at stake is: "To what extent was Christianity affected by its environment? Was its character so revolutionized

[1] I. p. 265. [2] I. p. 266.

that it became a new and different religion ? Is the Christianity of Paul and the fourth Gospel a natural development of the original Christian facts, or is it the result of the infiltration of extraneous and external influences ? "

If there was a radical change in the character of Christianity, the revolution must have taken place within the first twenty years of its history—and unfortunately our records for this period are very meagre and scanty. Our only source of information is to be found in the first fifteen chapters of Acts, and nine of these chapters deal with the story of the first five years. The result is that for fifteen years—from A.D. 35–50—we have only the very scrappy material that can be gleaned from six chapters of Acts. Christianity, to use a well-known metaphor, entered a tunnel after the Resurrection, from which it did not emerge into the clear light of day till the commencement of the missionary journeys of Paul, and it is only at intervals that the gloom of the tunnel is illuminated by fitful rays of light. The silence of history affords opportunity for the play of imagination, and opens the door for the hypothesis propounded in the *Beginnings of Christianity* and by other advocates of the Historico-Critical Method. The revolution, if there was a revolution, must have taken place in the tunnel in the early days, when the absence of evidence and certain fact offers scope for conjecture and surmise.

The objections to this theory—when it is stated as the sole explanation of the change which took

place in Christianity in the course of its development —are overwhelming. There is no proof that during the first twenty years of its existence Christianity had the opportunity of any real and vital contact with Græco-Roman thought. Its activities were in the main confined within the borders of Palestine, though towards the end of the period pioneer missionaries had penetrated into the province of Syria and founded an important Church at Antioch. Moreover, for the most part, the movement was confined to Jews. The reaction of the Gentile missions upon Christianity had not yet had time to assert itself. There is always, of course, the Apostle Paul to be reckoned with. He at any rate had undeniable possibilities of coming into contact with the culture both of the East and of the West during the time he spent in the province of Cilicia after his conversion. But though Paul came into conflict with the Christians of Palestine on the question of foreign missions, there is no hint of any radical difference between his faith and theirs on any other point. And if he had revolutionized the character of the Christian faith in any other important aspect, it would certainly have been thrown in his teeth during the bitter controversy that ensued.

Moreover, even supposing that this contact had been possible for Christianity as a whole during the early formative years of its existence, how is it that the "synthesis between Judaism and Græco-Oriental thought" was able to produce the Christian faith—unless its essential elements had already been

in being? It is quite certain that the particular phase of Judaism connected with the name of Jesus was not the only type which was brought into contact with "Græco-Oriental thought." There are many such combinations known to history. We find a similar union, for instance, in such books as *The Wisdom of Solomon* and *IV Maccabees*. There is evidence that the teaching of John the Baptist was transplanted into Asia-Minor, where it had the same chances of marriage with Greek thought as Christianity; with the result that it produced nothing more than the sect of the Mandæans. Above all, there is the crowning example of Philo at Alexandria. If the *vera causa* in the creation of Christianity was the fusion of Judaism and Græco-Oriental thought, why was it that Philo did not become the founder of the new religion? Philo had many advantages over Jesus. He lived in a city where the two great streams, which at their meeting were on this theory to create the new faith, had mingled their waters for some centuries. Jesus was isolated in Palestine and had no opportunity Himself of guiding the Jewish faith in the direction of Hellenism at all. Philo was himself a master in the knowledge of both forms of thought and was as much at home in the one as in the other. It was his great ambition to reconcile the two, and out of them to construct a religious faith that should command the intellect of the world. And yet he failed in his great purpose! On the theory that Christianity is Judaism impregnated by Græco-

Oriental thought, Philo, and not Jesus, ought to have become the founder of the new religion. The fact that its real founder is Jesus and not Philo proves that the theory is wrong. It is the *differentia* between Jesus and Philo that accounts for the success of the former and the failure of the latter: in other words, it is the personality of Jesus that is the creative fact in Christianity and not the environments.

When we come to estimate the influence of Jesus on the life and thought of the Apostolic age, it is obvious that a new set of factors emerges. The Jesus of history still remains, but there is something more besides—the Christ of experience. And if we want to understand the development of theology in the Christian Church, it is to the Christ of experience we must look for its explanation and its cause. It was what Christ had become to the souls of the first believers that led them—and led them inevitably—into the region of a higher Christology. Christian experience is the root out of which Christian theology sprang up. Our first task, therefore, must be an attempt to analyse the various elements in this experience.

As Dr. Percy Gardner in his *Exploratio Evangelica* has said: "The fact is that the life of Jesus was the occasion and the cause of an enormous development of the spiritual faculties and perceptions of men. He found us children in all that regards the hidden life, and he left us men. The writings of his immediate followers show a fulness and ripeness of

spiritual feeling and knowledge, which makes the best of previous religious literature, even the writings of Isaiah and Plato, seem superficial and imperfect. From that time onwards men in Christian countries seem to have gained new faculties of spiritual observation, and to those faculties there has lain open a new world of experience of the higher life."[1]

The primary fact which formed the germ out of which the religious experience of the Apostolic age developed is undoubtedly the Resurrection of Jesus. The fact of the Resurrection is the great foundation upon which the whole fabric of the Church was built up. Without the Resurrection the story becomes inexplicable. Some explanation is needed to account for the sudden change in the spirit of the disciples. When the Gospel narrative closes, the curtain falls upon a group of baffled and disillusioned men. The Cross is the symbol of failure and disappointment. The cause seems hopeless. Everything is lost. There is only one course open to them, and that is to return to Galilee and resume their old avocations. When the Acts of the Apostles opens, the picture reveals a band of heroes. They have come back from Galilee. They have given up their fishercraft forever. We find them in the public streets of Jerusalem preaching to the crowd which only a few weeks before had hounded their Master to His doom. This transformation needs to be accounted for, and the Resurrection is the only key that fits the lock.

[1] pp. 118, 119.

There can be no doubt that the Church was born out of the conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead.

It is hard to believe that the experience was unreal or that it was merely of a subjective nature. The disciples were confronted from the first with the most bitter hostility. Christianity grew up in the fierce light that beats upon a new religion. The Sadducees became its most implacable enemies. They left no stone unturned in their efforts to destroy the movement in its infancy. If the body of Jesus still lay in its rock-hewn sepulchre, why was it not produced? We cannot suppose that the Sadducees would have neglected to bring forward evidence which would have destroyed the new faith by a single stroke, if it had been available. It is psychologically impossible to suppose that the disciples themselves were parties to a plot to destroy the evidence, for that would leave their own return to faith a greater mystery than ever. The persistence of their conviction of the truth of the Resurrection in the face of fiery persecution and martyrdom is in itself proof that no shadow of doubt remained in their minds, and that the testimony by which the fact had been demonstrated to their minds in the first instance continued unshaken to the end.

It is impossible to discuss in this connexion the many problems that cluster round the narratives of the Resurrection. It is difficult to deny that on many points of detail the evidence is contradictory. There

seems to be a discrepancy in our documents as to the *locale* of the appearances of Jesus to His disciples, some of the narratives placing them mainly in Galilee, others mainly in Jerusalem. Some of the statements in the Gospels seem to suggest that the Resurrection was of a physical nature and made its appeal to the senses : others appear to imply that it belonged rather to the category of the spiritual and made its appeal to the mind and soul. These issues, however, do not really affect our main contention, that the fact of the Resurrection, whatever form it may have assumed and wherever the appearances may have taken place, was the great foundation upon which the faith of the primitive Christian Church was based.

The Resurrection was quickly followed by a second great experience—the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. Here again the narrative is surrounded with many critical problems, and it is not easy in view of the statements of Acts to answer the question, What was it that really happened at Pentecost ? We may be quite certain that the account in Acts is a complete misinterpretation of the experience, so far as the " gift of tongues " is concerned. The theory that the essence of Pentecost lay in the fact that the disciples were supernaturally endowed with the gift of speaking in foreign languages is psychologically impossible. There is no trace of proof that the early preachers of the Gospel possessed this linguistic endowment at all. On the contrary we are distinctly told by Papias that Peter needed an

interpreter, and the book of Acts itself implies that Paul was ignorant of the language of the Lycaonians.[1] The real significance of Pentecost seems to lie in the fact that on that day the Christians in Jerusalem were clothed with new spiritual power and endowed with divine strength for the task of evangelizing the world. The nearest modern analogy to Pentecost is to be found in the memorable Watchnight Service which inaugurated the Evangelical Revival in 1739. John Wesley thus describes it in his Journal: "About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of His Majesty, we broke out with one voice: 'We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.'"[2] Before this meeting the preaching of Whitefield and Wesley had been attended with very small results: almost immediately afterwards the most startling success attended it. Exactly the same thing happened at Pentecost. The new endowment of spiritual power rendered the preaching of the first Apostles so effectual that there was what we call to-day a "mass movement" in Jerusalem towards the Christian Church.

Rightly or wrongly the Christians in Jerusalem connected this experience at Pentecost with Jesus—Who "having been exalted by the right hand of

[1] Acts xiv. 11–14. [2] Ed. of 1901, I. pp. 160, 161.

God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, hath poured forth this which ye now see and hear."[1] We are entitled to draw the following conclusions: (1) The experience of Pentecost was unique, and so overwhelming that it could be compared only with the outpouring of the Spirit which the prophet Joel had connected with "the last days." (2) Whether the early Christians were right or wrong in attributing the gift of power that came upon them directly to the agency of Jesus, it is inconceivable to suppose that the experience of Pentecost could have arisen apart from Jesus. It is quite legitimate to draw the inference that it was by reason of what Jesus had become to the disciples that the experience of Pentecost was possible at all. If there had been no Jesus, or if Jesus had not risen from the dead, there would not have been a Pentecost at all. (3) The experience of Pentecost produced in the minds of the disciples a sense of triumphant exultation which was out of all relation to the circumstances of their environment. In spite of the Crucifixion of their Master, in spite of the "clenched antagonisms" that were ranged against them, in spite of arrest and imprisonment and even martyrdom, they felt themselves to be invincible and they were certain that their final victory was secure. This new mood—this miraculous transformation of spirit—is in itself the final guarantee that the experience, whatever psychological analysis we may make of it, must have been a tremendous and an

[1] Acts ii. 33.

overpowering fact. The early history of the Christian Church cannot be explained as the result of natural causation. Apart from Jesus and the power that flowed out of His personality it is an inexplicable mystery.

But it was not merely at the beginning of things that the impulse of the Church came from Jesus. Pentecost was no isolated event in the history of early Christianity. There are other records in Acts of a similar experience.[1] And everywhere in Acts we are conscious that the Church is under the constraint of a higher power. At all the great crises of the story there is abundant evidence that the development is shaped and moulded by divine guidance and leadership. No book of the New Testament is more full of the supernatural than Acts, and the supernatural element in it, to use a paradox, is never more supernatural than when it works in what we should deem natural ways. The commencement of the second missionary journey of Paul affords us an excellent illustration of the presence of the "unseen hand" which shapes the destiny of the Church.[2] Paul, after consolidating the work of his first journey in the cities of Galatia, is seeking a new field for missionary enterprise. He is attracted first of all to the province of Asia. The way, however, is blocked. He is "prevented by the Holy Spirit." Nothing daunted by this rebuff, he essays to enter the province of Bithynia. Once

[1] Acts iv. 31; x. 44, *cf.* xi. 15; xix. 6.
[2] Acts xvi. 6–10.

again the door is shut in his face. "The spirit of Jesus suffered them not." And it is not till the vision of the man from Macedonia comes to him at Troas that he realizes that Greece is to be his divinely-appointed mission-field. The equation of the two phrases "prevented by the Holy Spirit" and "the spirit of Jesus suffered them not" shows that, at any rate by the time Acts was written, "the spirit of Jesus" and "the Holy Spirit" had come to have very much the same meaning for Christian experience.

But it is to the Epistles of Paul that we must turn if we want to realize all that Jesus had become in the experience of the men and women of the Apostolic Age. The Epistles are great literature because they are great "human documents" and lead us into the inmost shrine—the *penetralia*—of the human soul. Though they were written primarily for the men of the first century, and deal with first-century problems, they are of eternal value, because they take us into "the soul's profound" and penetrate into the hidden depths of the human heart, where there is "neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian or Scythian, bond or free," but where human nature is the same "yesterday, to-day, and for ever." There are few who would not admit to-day that Paul has entered further than any of the ancients, further than Sophocles, or Plato, or Aristotle, or Juvenal, or Tacitus, or Seneca, and further than any of the moderns, further than Shakespeare or Goethe, or Kant, or Hegel, into the

deepest elements of human experience, and has laid bare the heart of man.

The Epistles afford us ample material for a psychological analysis of the Christian experience of the Apostolic age. Paul himself in his great autobiographical statements has revealed the inner processes of his own religious development. The seventh chapter of Romans, taken in conjunction with the statements of Galatians and Philippians, enables us to realize something of the anguish of the moral struggle through which Paul passed on his way towards the goal of truth and righteousness.

Paul was trained in his early days in a strict Pharisaic school. He was taught from infancy that the moral ideal was embodied in the Jewish law, and that perfection could be attained only by obedience to its enactments. There can be no question that at one time he felt that he had been able to realize the ideal, for he tells in Philippians that, "according to the righteousness which is in the law," he was "found blameless" (iii. 6). In course of time, however, he discovered that one of the commandments—"Thou shalt not covet"—dealt not with external acts of wrongdoing but with the motives and inner springs of conduct. This discovery disturbed his self-complacency. He had been able to keep himself free from the crimes and evil conduct prohibited in the Ten Commandments, but the control of wrong desire and impure thought was another matter altogether. As long as the law was content with demanding abstinence from murder,

theft, and adultery, there was not much difficulty for Paul in obeying its precept. But when it insisted upon purity of thought and motive, then it seemed to Paul to set men an impossible task. Exactly the same discovery was made by the author of IV Maccabees, who makes the assertion that "Reason is not master over defects inhering in the mind itself, but over the passions or moral defects that are adverse to justice and manliness and temperance and judgement" (i. 6). It was this discovery that brought Paul into the anguish of the moral struggle. He had been educated to believe the proud vaunt that "only the children of the Hebrews are victorious in the fight for virtue," and now he had found out that even a "Hebrew of the Hebrews" was impotent in the face of the demands of the law. It was because Paul was so fine a Pharisee and carried his Pharisaic ideal to its logical conclusion that he became involved in a hopeless moral conflict. Pharisaism broke down for Paul because it made demands that were unattainable. There could be no question that those demands were right—but how could they possibly be realized? Pharisaism was hopelessly defective because it lacked the moral dynamic which makes the realization of its ideals possible, and left men in their impotence to cry out with Job, "How can a man be just with God?"

It was because of Paul's passion for righteousness and his wholehearted devotion to the moral ideal that for him the struggle became so acute and bitter. His despairing cry, "When I would do good,

evil is present," is very different from the casual sigh of Ovid, "*Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor.*" It represents the torture of a great soul seeking an exit from the moral *impasse* into which it had been led by its own high qualities. We cannot dismiss this conflict of Paul as morbid and unusual, because it is too well authenticated in human experience. As Professor T. H. Green once put it, "There have been many in all ages, whether nursed in Christianity or no, . . . to whom, at some crisis of their lives, the record of St. Paul's deliverance has come as life from the dead. The account of his case is also the account of theirs." It is not too much to say that in the agony of Paul's struggle with sin there was mirrored the tragedy of humanity. As F. W. H. Myers has so finely said, the

> "Desperate tides of the whole great world's anguish"

were

> "Forced thro' the channels of a single heart."

Paul found the solution of his problem in Jesus Christ. As he says in Romans viii. 3, "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son . . . as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." We may question the terminology which Paul uses, and we may criticize his account of the *modus operandi* by which he conceives the deliverance to have been wrought, but the fact itself is beyond all dispute. Jesus Christ did provide Paul with the exit, for which he had hitherto sought in vain within the

resources of his Jewish faith, from the moral *impasse* in which he had been so helplessly involved. The particular interpretation which he puts upon his experience of deliverance may be challenged, but that the experience itself was real and genuine is beyond all possibility of doubt. The modern antipathy to the theological structure which Paul has built up around this primary and fundamental experience has often blinded men's eyes, and made them forget the true validity and significance of the experience itself. The ultimate and basal fact, which cannot be denied, is that Paul found in Jesus Christ deliverance from the forces of evil which had held him in bondage. An experience such as this inevitably gave Christ a supreme place in Paul's mental and moral outlook.

But while such an experience as that which came to Paul is possible only to a man with a genius for morality and a passion for the ideal of righteousness, yet in varying degrees of intensity and with different forms of expression a similar type of experience was common in the Apostolic age. Though many members of the Christian Church must have approached the new faith along the road of quest for truth and found in it the answer to the " obstinate questionings " which beset their minds, the evidence seems to prove conclusively that the vast majority of the early Christians belonged to a different class. It seems to be quite clear that large numbers of them were won from the lowest depths of degradation and vice. In the sixth chapter of 1 Corinthians, the

Apostle Paul, after giving a list of the worst vices and sins of pagan society—vices and sins for some of which there is no equivalent word in the English language—adds the significant words, "Such were some of you; but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (v. 11). When describing the earlier life of some of the Christians at Rome Paul says, "Ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity."[1] When Plato in his *Republic* set out to create an ideal state upon paper, he carefully selected his citizens and subjected them to a long course of education, in order to fit them for the place they were destined to fill in his Utopia. Paul and the leaders of the early Christian Church, on the other hand, were compelled to work with the raw material which came into their hands—the "broken earthenware," as Harold Begbie calls it, of Corinth and Ephesus and Rome and the other cities of the ancient world—men and women who had been "snatched as brands from the burning" and bore upon their faces and embedded in their characters the marks of their old sins. Never before in the history of the world, as far as our records show, had there been such a display of moral regenerative power. Large numbers of men and women passed "from darkness unto light and from the power of Satan unto God." The change that took place in their lives was so radical and so

[1] Rom. vi. 19.

revolutionary, that the whole personality was transfigured. They became "new men." The old self had been destroyed, and a new self had risen in its place. Victory over evil habits and passions, which had once seemed impossible, now became not only practicable but comparatively easy. The new influence touched the inner springs and sources of action, and life was transformed, in many cases transformed with a startling suddenness.

The fact that many cases of relapse occurred (it would have been a miracle if they had not) does not greatly minimize the evidence of the New Testament that large masses of converts found in Christianity a moral lever which brought a new and higher life within their reach. Ancient philosophy had long been in search for some "power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness," to use Matthew Arnold's phrase. It had been baffled by the problem of finding some means by which the bad man could be made good. Aristotle frankly confessed at the commencement of the *Nicomachean Ethics* that a "man who was still the slave of passion would listen to his arguments in vain and derive no profit from them." Plato thought that the secret was to be found in education, though he was compelled to admit that the only effect education seemed to have upon some men was to change them into "very devils." Then Christ comes upon the scene and reverses the despairing words of Aristotle with the message, "I am not come to call righteous men but sinners" to repentance, and the history of the

Apostolic age proves conclusively that this was no idle phrase. There was undoubtedly a "mass movement" towards virtue in the early Christian communities, and this movement was made possible by Jesus Christ. The terms in which the New Testament describes the *rationale* of conversion naturally belong to the first century, and some of them have no meaning for our modern world; but the inescapable fact that underlies the archaic phraseology is surely this, that in the universal experience of early Christendom *Jesus Christ had altered the balance of forces in the moral life and made virtue and goodness attainable in a way that had never been possible before.*

Then there is a second element in the religious experience of Paul and the early Christians which, for want of a better word, may be termed the "mystical element." It is comparatively recently that the mystical side of Paul's theology has received full recognition. Protestant theology for the most part did less than justice to Paul. It laid all the stress upon the doctrine of Justification by Faith, and ignored, or almost ignored, the companion doctrine which is so patent in the Epistles, of mystical union with Christ. Without attempting to trace the history of the change which has revolutionized the modern interpretation of the Pauline theology for modern scholarship, it may be said that in England our greatest debt is perhaps due to Matthew Arnold, who in his *St. Paul and Protestantism* lashed out against the defects of the older methods of exegesis. Professor T. H. Green, too,

in his *Lay Sermons* fastened upon the mystical element as the main truth in Paulinism, and tried to interpret it along the lines of the Hegelian philosophy. In Germany Deissmann, in recent times, has been the chief champion of the newer view, and his textual investigations have given it a firm critical basis.

What, then, are the characteristics of the Pauline mysticism, and in what sense can the term be legitimately applied to his teaching? To begin with, it is a "Christ-mysticism," as Deissmann calls it. It is essentially a communion or fellowship between Paul and the living eternal Christ. The Apostle's language seems to be unmistakable upon this point. The formula "in Christ" or "in the Lord," with its correlative "Christ in me," occurs and recurs constantly in the Epistles—the former being used on a hundred and sixty-four occasions. "We have been united (*σύμφυτοι*, "vitally connected") with Christ," says Paul in Romans,[1] "by the likeness of His death." "I am in travail," he writes to the Galatians, "till Christ be formed in you."[2] And elsewhere he uses the remarkable words, "If any man is *in* Christ Jesus (not merely 'believes in' Christ Jesus) he is a new creature."[3] "God has willed to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."[4] "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; but if Christ be in you the body is dead

[1] vi. 5.
[2] iv. 19.
[3] 2 Cor. v. 17.
[4] Col. i. 27.

because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness."[1]

Language such as this is far too definite to be mere poetry. Paul undoubtedly possesses the poetic gift. No finer prose poem has ever been written than the Hymn of Love in Corinthians xiii. "Over and over again," as T. R. Glover has put it, "there is a sound of singing in Paul." There are moments when the Apostle seems to be carried away by his imagination, and when we might almost say that he looks out upon the world through the eyes of a Homer. Just as Homer saw in his vision, behind the din of the contending armies on the plains of Troy, the conflict of warring gods up in Olympus, so there are times when Paul almost seems to regard the soul of man as a battlefield upon which two spiritual empires—the empire of grace and the empire of sin—are contending for the victory. We make a great mistake when we fail to recognize the strong vein of poetical imagination that runs through the soul of the Apostle Paul. But the mystical language which permeates the Epistles is not mere poetry, except in the sense in which all mysticism is poetry.

We must not, therefore, take these utterances of Paul as a metaphorical way of describing the influence which the life and teaching of Jesus had exerted over him and his fellow-Christians in the first century. We cannot paraphraze the sentence, "till Christ be formed in you," as meaning "till you have incorporated into your lives the ideals of

[1] Romans viii. 9, 10.

Jesus." The effect which Christ produced upon Paul was not that which George Eliot described as the result of the lives of the good and the great who live again

> In minds made better by their presence ; live
> In pulses stirred to generosity,
> In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
> For miserable aims that end with self,
> In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
> And with their mild persistence urge men's search
> To vaster issues.[1]

It is not thus that Paul spoke of his relationship to Christ. On the contrary, there is very little reference in his writings to the historical Jesus. His words about no more knowing Christ after the flesh,[2] whatever else they may mean, must at any rate imply that his knowledge of Christ was of a spiritual and not of a historical nature.

It is impossible, therefore, to evade the conclusion that Paul in his mystical phraseology is referring to a very definite religious experience of the actual presence of the living and eternal Christ in his life. There had grown up between the soul of Paul and the spirit of Christ such a comradeship that he could write the great words, "I have been crucified with Christ ; yet I live ; yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me."

There have been many attempts to account for the origin of the mystical element in the religious experience of Paul. Deissmann has suggested that

[1] *O may I join the Choir Invisible.*
[2] 2 Cor. v. 16.

Paul was a mystic before he became a Christian; but that is an assertion which it is very difficult to prove in the absence of any tangible evidence. All we can say is that there were features in his old Jewish faith which may have predisposed him towards this type of religious experience, and the predisposition may have been deepened and strengthened by Stoic influences. If we can trust the evidence of the speech at Athens (and Luke does not seem to me to have had sufficient historical imagination to have invented that speech), Paul was acquainted with Stoic literature, and his use of the phrase " in Him we live and move and have our being " seems to suggest that the mystical faith was common ground to Stoicism and Christianity. But it does not seem possible that either Judaism or Stoicism could have created the mystical experience of Paul. If they had been the main source of Paul's faith, it must have assumed a very different form. It would not at any rate have taken the shape of a Christ-mysticism. It would have developed along the lines of the speech at Athens, and not along the lines of the statements of the Epistles.

We must look, therefore, in other directions for an explanation of the origin of Paul's mystical utterances. They cannot be dissociated from the religious experience that came to him on the day of his conversion. It is impossible here to enter into a discussion of the critical problems that surround the narratives of the conversion in Acts. The records of this event in Acts are almost certainly coloured

by the accretions of tradition and the imagination of the historian. But we can be absolutely certain of this, that something happened on that road to Damascus—some tremendous experience which left no shadow of doubt in the mind of Saul of Tarsus that Jesus of Nazareth had risen from the dead and had broken into his life. And this experience, though it may have been unique in its form, and must have been predominant in the effect that it produced, was no solitary, isolated event which happened once and for all, and had nothing analogous to it in Paul's later life. In the Epistles the risen Christ is everywhere. Every road that Paul travelled was like that road to Damascus, lit up with the glory of the presence of the Lord. He lived in constant intercourse and companionship with the spirit of Jesus. The eternal Christ was as great a reality to him as the historical Jesus had been to the first disciples among the hills of Galilee. And the soul of Paul and the Spirit of Christ became so interfused and interpenetrated with each other that he came to feel that his own personality was lost in that of Christ, and that his life "was hid with Christ in God." Great as was his own experience, Paul at any rate did not think that it was peculiar to himself. What Christ was to him, He was to other Christians as well. To possess the Spirit of Christ, to live "in Christ" was not only the prerogative of every Christian, but without this experience there could be no Christian life worthy of the name at all.

The objection is often raised, May not Paul have misinterpreted his religious experience ? May he not have transferred the ordinary mystical experience which is common in the history of religion from God to Christ ? Every religion in so far as it establishes contact between man and God is bound to have a mystical element. Longfellow's savage whose

> " feeble hands and helpless,
> Groping idly in the darkness
> Touch God's right hand in that darkness,
> And are lifted up and strengthened," [1]

stands at the beginning of the great succession of the mystics, for " to touch God's right hand in the darkness " implies at any rate the germ of the mystical experience.

The Old Testament and the Upanishads of India, the philosophy of Plato and Stoicism, the Greek Cults and the Mystery Religions, all alike afford in different degrees illustrations of the prevalence of the mystical conception of religion. When, for instance, the author of the 139th Psalm wrote the classic statement : " Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ? or whither shall I flee from thy presence ? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there ! If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there ! If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand uphold me," is there any essential difference between his religious experience and that of the Apostle Paul ? Is not Paul

[1] *Hiawatha*, Introd.

simply attributing to Christ what other men ascribed to God ?

Such an explanation, however, raises more problems than it solves. In the first place, we are bound to ask the question, What were the grounds upon which Paul was led to substitute Christ for God in his interpretation of his mystical experience ? It cannot be said that the reason is due to ignorance. The speech at Athens shows that Paul was perfectly familiar with the ordinary type of mysticism. In fact, that speech is an admirable commentary on the words of the Psalmist. There must, therefore, have been some quality attached to his religious experience which differentiated it entirely from the more common types of mysticism. Secondly, even if Deissmann is right in supposing that Paul's temperament and training predisposed him to a mystical interpretation of religion, it certainly would not have predisposed him to the substitution of Christ for God. The tendency must have inevitably been in the opposite direction. We should have expected that Christianity would naturally have deepened and intensified the mystical element in his religion : but there is nothing to account for the substitution of a Christ-mysticism for a God-mysticism. Thirdly, even if we admit the possibility of such a substitution, it only affords a new illustration of the tremendous place Jesus had come to hold in Paul's esteem. And we should be left with the problem, What was there in Paul's experience of Jesus that made it possible for him to effect this

interchange ? Jesus must have already attained the value of God for Paul before the substitution could be possible at all. Fourthly, Paul's experience has been vindicated by the similar experiences of the Christian mystics throughout the centuries. We cannot question the Pauline experience, unless we also challenge the testimony of his successors in later times.

It must be remembered, too, that this mystical element in Paul's religion was not merely a theory, it was the driving force in his life. He was completely under its sway. It carried him onwards " as with a flood." It shaped and moulded his career. It inspired all his missionary work. If there is any validity at all in the canon which, according to the fourth Gospel, Jesus laid down for testing spiritual values, " If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God " (and, if there is, the canon must be regarded as valid for the first century as well as for the twentieth), we ought to hesitate before we cavil at Paul's account of the faith that inspired his life ; for where in all the long line of Christian saints can we find a man who has more resolutely set himself to do the will of God, who has more unreservedly, to use his own expression, " made it the one ambition of his life to be well pleasing unto him " ? The criterion, " By their fruits ye shall know them," cannot, of course, be a final test of truth where the truth of Christian doctrine is concerned, but it does constitute a factor, and an important factor, in estimating its value.

And over and above the individual mystical experience of Christ, there is also what may be called the communal mysticism in the life of the Christian Church. This communal mysticism is involved in Paul's conception of the Church as the "Body of Christ." What does this metaphor (for it is, of course, a metaphor) imply? A body is the tool or organ of the soul. It is the instrument by means of which the soul finds self-expression. A man may be an artist, and he may have seen a wonderful vision in the moment of his illumination; but before he can transfer the vision by which he has been enthralled to other minds, he must make use of the organ of the body. He must paint the picture or he must carve the statue. A man may be a musician, and his mind may be thrilled with the divinest symphonies; but before he can transfer this music to others, he must employ the faculties of his body. He must play upon the organ or the violin or he must use his voice in song. It is through such illustrations as these that we can best realize something of what is involved in the conception of the Church as the body of Christ. The earthly body which Jesus used as the instrument for self-expression during His life in Palestine was broken at the Crucifixion, and was superseded by a new and spiritual body—the Christian Church. What the earthly body was to the Jesus of history, the Church, ideally at any rate, is to the eternal spirit of the Christ. It is through the Church that the eternal Christ finds self-expression. It must be remembered,

however, that it is the mystical experience of the presence of Christ—and that alone—which makes the Church "the body of Christ." Paul would never have said that the Church *per se*, in all circumstances and conditions, is necessarily the body of Christ. It is only when it acts under the inspiration of the Spirit that it can claim to be the spokesman and ambassador of Christ. The mischief has always been that the Church has claimed the Pauline doctrine when it has lost the Pauline experience.

This communal mysticism acted as a wholesome corrective to the experience of the individual Christians. In the first place, it was larger and wider. The individual experience is necessarily limited by the capacity of the recipient, which often catches only a single ray of the divine truth. The full orbed radiance can be realized only by the community as a whole. Again, not every impulse that comes to a man is an impulse of the Spirit; and it is often not easy to distinguish between inspiration and prejudice. It was necessary, as Paul puts it, to "try the spirits"; and this could be done only by testing them in the common life of the Church. The individual mystical experience is apt to develop strange idiosyncrasies, unless it is corrected by the general experience of the Church as a whole.

It is not necessary to dwell upon the fact that this mystical sense of communion with Christ was fostered by the Christian Sacraments. No interpretation which regards the sacraments as mere symbols does adequate justice to the statements of

Paul. It seems quite clear that to Paul's mind the sense of the mystical union with Christ was induced and maintained by the sacramental rites of the Church.

The mystical element in Paul's outlook is not a mere side-line, which can easily be detached from the rest of his theology ; it is the one thing that makes his theology intelligible to the modern mind. Paul's mysticism sheds no little light upon his doctrine of the Atonement. The modern mind is irritated beyond measure by such terms as " imputation " and " substitution," used in connexion with Pauline thought. They seem to us to-day to savour of unreality. The ideas which they convey are artificial. We are accustomed to call the Pauline doctrine of justification forensic and juridical. And if we take these terms out of the large context of Pauline thought, we are right. They are mere sophistries to us, and, read like this, they would have been mere sophistries to the mind of Paul as well. But read in the light of the mystical experience of union with Christ, they assume a different aspect altogether. They are transposed into a new key, and suffused with a new meaning.

To Paul the relation between the believer and his Lord was so intimate, the two were so blended and interpenetrated with each other, that, to use a later theological formula, there was a complete *communicatio idiomatum*, an interchange of attributes. What was predicated of the one could be predicated of the other ; the sin of man could be

imputed to Christ, and the righteousness of Christ could be imputed to men, by virtue of the spiritual union which existed between them. The whole system of Paul's thought, if it can be called a system at all, is mystical to the core ; and it is only when his theological phraseology is interpreted in a mystical sense that it has any meaning or significance for the thought of to-day. Apart from the reality of the mystical experience, Paulinism is a mere patchwork of Jewish pedantries and legalisms. It is only the reality of this experience that gives it an intelligible value and meaning, either for ancient or for modern thought.

It has been necessary to analyse at considerable length the different aspects of the religious experience of early Christianity, because it is on the fact and the reality of this experience that the *onus probandi* of our general argument rests. Granted the validity of the experience, the Apostolic Benediction follows as a natural and inevitable result. When Jesus became the supreme moral dynamic, when it was felt that He had altered the balance of forces in the moral struggle, when men realized that His continued spiritual presence was with them—not merely as a memory or an influence that came out of the past, but as an actual reality that made itself felt in the deepest tides of their religious experience—it was perfectly obvious that there were forces flowing from Jesus which had hitherto been associated only with God Himself or with the

Holy Spirit. And it was because of these experiences, because of the transforming power of Jesus in the moral life, because of the stimulus and inspiration that came from the realization of His abiding presence in men's lives, that Jesus came to have the value of God for the men of the Apostolic age.

It is sometimes argued that there was a precedent for the Benediction in the Book of Wisdom, where God, Wisdom, and the Spirit are linked together in the same sentence. "And whoever gained knowledge of thy counsel, except Thou gavest Wisdom and sentest thy Holy Spirit from on high?" (ix. 17). But though words like this, and the fact that such conceptions exist side by side in the Book of Wisdom, may have formed the original germ out of which the Benediction and the Christian doctrine of the Trinity were ultimately derived, they do not solve the problem we are facing now. The real issue is, How did it come to pass that Jesus was given rank in the formula of the Benediction with God and the Holy Spirit?

To argue that the Benediction is adumbrated in the Book of Wisdom does not touch the point. Granted that a man whose mind was steeped in the Book of Wisdom, as Paul's undoubtedly was, might easily find himself thinking in what may be called, in later phraseology, Trinitarian terms, there is still no explanation why this high prerogative should have been assigned to Jesus, and why He should have been linked in the same clause with God and the Spirit. The only solution of this problem is to

be found in the fact of Christian experience. For Christian experience there was little difference between the influence of the Holy Spirit and the influence of Jesus in human life. The same virtues and the same power seemed to flow equally from both. When Paul tries to explain the change that had come over the lives of the men and women who had been converted from paganism to Christianity, he does it in words which have already been quoted. "Ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11). In the eighth chapter of Romans, in four consecutive verses (8–11), Paul uses "the Spirit of Christ" and "the Spirit of God" as almost convertible terms; and in one famous statement in 2 Corinthians iii. 17 Paul boldly declares that "the Lord is the Spirit." It may be possible that the theology of the New Testament draws a distinction between "the Spirit of Christ" and the Holy Spirit, as E. F. Scott has recently tried to prove; but for Christian experience the difference between them is much less clear. The effects of the one seem to be almost identical with the effects of the other, and it is because of this that Jesus and the Spirit are conjoined in the Benediction.

It was, then, because of what Jesus had become in the deepest experiences of the human soul, that He obtained His place in the Benediction by the general consent of the Christian Church. Or as Dorner once put it,[1] the early disciples "had experienced Christianity as a Divine history of their

[1] *The Person of Christ*, Eng. trans., Div. I, Vol. I, p. 47

inner being; believing in Christ, they had obtained access to God; in the Son they had found the Father. In this innermost, most certain fact of their consciousness, there lay for them the impulse and the necessity to place the person of Christ, the *founder* of this their new life, in the closest, most vital relation to the Father."

CHAPTER IV

THE FAITH OF THE SECOND AND THIRD CHRISTIAN GENERATIONS

THE first generation of Christians, as we have seen, carried the faith from the first simple creed, "Jesus is the Messiah," to the Benediction in which Jesus is given rank with God and the Holy Spirit in the same formula; but it did not face, except by occasional suggestion, the intellectual problems which the Benediction raised. In the first generation the efforts of the Church were concentrated on practical work and missionary enterprise, and men were too absorbed in the tasks of the hour to have leisure for speculative thought. They were content to bear their witness to the influence which Jesus had exerted over their lives and to proclaim the great facts involved in their own religious experience. But the Church could not evade the universal law which governs the process of intellectual development, that every new idea must inevitably pass through three stages—thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Or, to use the simple and homely illustration of Professor Drummond, the progress of thought is like a novel in three volumes. In the first volume two young people meet and fall in love with each other. In the second volume an

insuperable obstacle thrusts itself into their path, and love's fair dream is shattered. In the third volume the obstacle is removed, and we have the glad sound of marriage bells. In the New Testament we may regard the Benediction as the thesis, the opposition of aberrant Christianity at Colossæ and elsewhere as the antithesis, and the Prologue to the fourth Gospel as the synthesis. Our theme, therefore, in the present chapter, is to trace the process by which the Benediction developed into the Prologue of the fourth Gospel.

The Benediction could not be a final statement of Christian faith for several reasons. In the first place, it was simply what Ritschl in later times called a value-judgment. It affirmed that Jesus had a religious value for the Christians of the first generation, of the same order as that which they had been accustomed to ascribe to God and to the Holy Spirit. It was, therefore, simply an enunciation of the facts of religious experience. But the Benediction inevitably raised many problems for the intellect of the Church. To say that religious experience proves that Christ has a divine value for the Christian, compels us to ask the question, What then is the relation between Christ and God, and how are they both related to the Holy Spirit? The Benediction leaves us with three separate and distinct entities —each of them guaranteed by the facts of religious experience. In what connexion do these three stand to each other? What kind of a being was this Christ Who had exerted such a unique influence over

the lives of men, an influence which had no parallel save in that which flowed from God Himself? Christianity was driven, therefore, perforce into the region of philosophy. It was compelled to seek an explanation of its faith. Jesus had authenticated Himself to the hearts and consciences of men; it was necessary that He should authenticate Himself to the intellect of the world as well. Then there came the challenge from the incipient Gnosticism of Asia Minor. Under the influence of the prevalent philosophy of the time, a section of the Christians in the Colossian Church seem to have propounded the theory that Jesus was to be identified with one of the lowest members of the hierarchy of angels who stood as intermediaries between God and man. It was this challenge that forced Paul to think out his own position. The Gnostic explanation was indignantly repudiated, partly because it came into conflict with the conclusion that had already been reached in the Benediction, and partly because it failed to do justice to the facts of Christian experience. Christian experience could not rest content with a theory that attributed only a minimum of Divinity to Jesus. It claimed for Him not a minimum but a maximum of Divinity. The first great Christological controversy was fought out on the issue whether the highest categories of thought, or something less than the highest, were to be used in the interpretation of Christ; and when that issue was once raised Christian experience rejected, as it always has rejected through all the Christological

debates in the history of the Church, the lower alternative.

The circumstances, therefore, which compelled Christianity to enter the domain of philosophy were, first, the imperative need of justifying itself to the intellect of the world, and, secondly, the equally imperative need of answering theories put forward by other people, which seemed to Christian experience unworthy and inadequate interpretations of Jesus.

Even in the earlier period there are clear indications that Paul was feeling his way towards a philosophical interpretation of Christ. We use the phrase, "feeling his way," deliberately. It is generally assumed that from the first Paul had a uniform and definite form of Christology, and that all his statements on the subject describe it from different angles ; and it is supposed that the main task of the theologian is to tabulate these Christological utterances and to weave them together into a harmonious whole. Such a theory is absolutely untrue to fact. The statements of Paul about Jesus are on the contrary so many *different experiments in Christology*. Paul travels along many roads of philosophy and religion in his attempts to find thought-forms and categories which he considers adequate for the interpretation of Christ. There is, of course, a general unity which lies behind the statements, but there is often a clash between them in the matter of detail.

The first attempt which Paul makes to find an

explanation of the Person of Christ is his endeavour in 1 Corinthians xv. 47 to interpret Christ in terms of the philosophical conception of the "heavenly" or "archetypal man." "The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven." The underlying truth, if this exegesis of the passage is correct, seems to depend upon the Platonic theory of Ideas. Everything on earth is an imperfect representation of a heavenly reality. Men are imperfect copies of the divine original; but the divine original has been incarnated in the life of Christ. The belief in an *Urmensch*, a heavenly archetype of manhood, does not itself seem to be Platonic, because in Plato's account of the Creation in the *Timœus*[1] he regards the nature of man as a strange mixture of different elements, the higher part of it being the work of God Himself, the rest the creation of the lower deities, though Zeller maintains that the existence of the Idea is implied, since the soul, "though not itself the Idea, is so closely combined with the Idea that it cannot be conceived without it."[2] The idea of the "heavenly man" is strongly emphasized by Philo, who noticed the difference between the two accounts of the Creation in the Book of Genesis (explained by modern scholars as excerpts from two different sources). He said that the one (ch. i.) represented the creation of a "heavenly" or "archetypal" man, who was made in the image of God—neither male nor female, and free from the taint of all

[1] 41 *seq.* [2] *Plato*, p. 389 (English trans. of 1876).

earthly substance; the other (ch. ii.), the making of an earthly man, compounded of earthly material and a divine spirit, with a mortal nature, and divided into male and female.[1]

There has been much debate among modern scholars as to the source from which Paul derived his conception of the "heavenly man." It is quite clear that he could not have taken it from Plato, because it is very unlikely that Paul had any first-hand knowledge of the works of Plato, and, moreover, it is very uncertain whether the idea occurs in Plato at all. It is equally certain that the statements in 1 Corinthians could not have been derived by Paul or any other writer from Philo, because the statement "not first the spiritual but the natural" is the exact antithesis of the position which Philo himself took up. It used to be thought that the idea was derived from a supposed Rabbinical designation of the Messiah as "the second" or the last "Adam": but this theory is now abandoned, as the evidence for it is very insecure.[2] Canon Rawlinson, who appears over-anxious to preclude the possibility that Paul derived any of his ideas from non-Jewish sources, thinks that the origin of the conception of the "heavenly man" is derived from the description of the Son of man in the Book

[1] Philo, *De leg. alleg.*, I., 12, 13. *De mund. opif.* 46.

[2] It was based on certain Rabbinic passages quoted by Schöttgen in *Horæ Hebraicæ*: but these passages are found only in a fifteenth-century Jewish work called *Neve Schalom*, and there is no proof that they can be traced back to an earlier date. See Thackeray, *The Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought*, pp. 41, 42.

of Enoch, who is depicted as a "being whose countenance had the appearance of a man, and his face was full of graciousness like one of the holy angels."[1] Others maintain that the source of the idea is to be found in a Hellenistic myth, which was widely diffused in the first century, according to which the creation of the world and of mankind is explained by the descent of a Primal Man, whose nature is divine, from heaven to earth.[2]

But though the question of origin is an interesting investigation from the academic point of view, it does not vitally affect the main issue we are considering. The noteworthy fact is that Paul fastened upon this conception of the "heavenly man" and used it for the purpose of interpreting Jesus. It was the category or *schema* which he employed in his effort to construe the person of Christ for the thought of his age. It is an advance upon the primitive Adoptionist Christology, because it implies the pre-existence of Christ as the "heavenly man," before His appearance upon the plane of earth. But that it was felt to be inadequate is proved by the fact that the later MSS. of the New Testament insert the words ὁ κύριος and make the text read, "The second man is the Lord from heaven."

[1] *The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ*, p. 126. The reference is to *Eth. Enoch*, xlvi. 1.

[2] So Bousset, *Die Religion des Judenthums*[2], pp. 405 *seq.*, and *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, p. 160. *Reitzenstein, Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, ed. 3, pp. 168 f., 177 f., 280, 1.; *Poimandres*, p. 81.

One of the characteristics of the earlier Christology of Paul is the stress which is laid upon the subordination of the Son to the Father. This is brought out most explicitly in the statement of 1 Corinthians xv. 28, "And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that subjected all things unto himself, that God may be all in all."

The next illustration which we may take of Paul's experiments in Christology is the famous statement in the Epistle to the Colossians (i. 15–17) where Jesus is described as "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for by him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him and unto him, and he is before all things, and in him all things consist."

The significance of this passage cannot be exaggerated. It is the intellectual miracle of the Apostolic age. Only thirty years have passed since Jesus of Nazareth was sentenced to death and crucified under Pontius Pilate; and here, in the Colossian statement, is the Apostle Paul, by a daring leap of the imagination, declaring that Jesus was God's agent in the creation of the universe of men and angels and things, that He is the sustaining power that maintains the life of the universe, and that He is the goal towards which the universe is

working its way, the centre of the "divine event to which the whole creation moves."

There has been much debate again as to the source from which Paul obtained these ideas. There seems to have been a great deal of speculation in the current religious philosophy of the time concerning the creation of the world. We find ample material, for instance, in Philo's doctrine of the Logos, or in the Stoic theory of the *Anima Mundi*, or in Poimandres, which might have helped to mould Paul's thought. It is not necessary, however, to go beyond the Jewish conception of "Wisdom" to find an explanation of the theological ideas involved in the Colossian statement. In the *Wisdom of Solomon* wisdom is described as the "artificer of all things." "She pervadeth and penetrateth all things." "She is an effulgence from everlasting light, and an unspotted mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness, and she, being one, hath power to do all things; and remaining in herself, reneweth all things." "She reacheth from one end of the world to the other with full strength, and ordereth all things well."[1]

But even when we have tracked down the ideas which Paul uses in his Christological utterances, we have by no means solved the problem. The real difficulty is to find an explanation of the fact that these ideas were attached to the person of Christ. That the ideas were in existence is, of course, proved to demonstration; in fact, they are

[1] *Op cit.*, vii 22, 24, 26, 27, viii 1

present in such wealth and in so many different forms of religious philosophy that scholars will probably always differ in their theories as to which particular type of thought, out of all those which existed at the time, has most affinity with the language actually used by the Apostle Paul. The question of the origin of the ideas, it must be repeated, raises an interesting academic discussion, but it does not touch the main issue.

Granted that all the necessary categories and theological formulæ were lying ready to hand in the storehouse of the Jewish, Greek, and Oriental cults of the time, that the whole Christological outfit was waiting in the wardrobe of current thought for someone to wear, that the necessary terminology was at the disposal of any theologian who cared to use it—Why was it that Jesus was selected for this honour and dignity? Why was it that all these crowns were placed upon His brow? Why was it that He and He alone was chosen to bear the highest categories available at the time? That is the question to which the scholars of the "Historico-Critical" school have hitherto failed to give an adequate answer.

The fundamental issue, therefore, which cannot be evaded is, How was it that the Apostle Paul came to apply the language of Colossians to Jesus? It is often argued that the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul, which had passed from Platonism into Jewish thought, was the starting-point from which Paul's Christology was derived. But though there

are some traces of this idea in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, Philo, and elsewhere, it cannot be said that it ever became naturalized in Jewish theology. Canon Rawlinson thinks that Paul's Christology is to be traced back to the identification of Jesus with the Son of Man in the Book of Enoch. But that suggestion only pushes the problem back another stage and raises the question, Why was this identification of Jesus with the Enochian conception of the Son of Man ever made at all ?

The solution of the problem must be looked for in Paul's religious experience. That alone seems to me to give any real explanation of the Christology of Colossians. To Paul, as we have seen, the resurrection of Jesus was the supreme fact in his religious faith. His Christ-mysticism gave him the assurance that the Spirit of Christ was an abiding presence in his life. The post-existence of Christ after death was such a certainty to Paul, that he seems to me to have reversed (unconsciously, of course) the argument of Plato in the *Phædo*. Plato had argued from the pre-existence of the soul to its immortality ; and Paul, from his certainty of the post-existence of Jesus after death, leapt to the conclusion that post-existence implied a pre-existence as well. A life which had survived the death upon the Cross could not have come into existence first of all when Jesus was born at Bethlehem. This implicit argument of Paul for the pre-existence of Jesus had at any rate as much validity for ancient thought as the inverse argu-

ment of Plato for the immortality of the soul in *Phædo*. But if the pre-existence of Jesus is admitted, what was the character of His activity in His pre-existent state? It is at this point that the leap of imagination occurs, and it is probably the most daring leap of imagination known to the history of thought. Christ had become the centre of Paul's moral universe, the source of all that was best and highest in his life—his "all in all"; and this being so, Paul, generalizing from his own experience, comes to the inevitable conclusion that He must always have been the centre of the life of the universe as a whole.

From the point of view of logic, of course, it is illegitimate to argue from the moral to the cosmic sphere. The fact that Christ had become the focus of Paul's moral life does not justify the deduction that He must always have been the centre of the cosmic life of the world. And yet, as Sorley has recently taught us in his *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, when we have found the ultimate moral reality (and Paul was quite certain that he had found the ultimate moral reality in Jesus Christ), we have inevitably found something more, unless we are prepared to acquiesce in a final metaphysical dualism. In the final issue moral reality and cosmic reality must originate in the same source and be two aspects of the same ultimate fact.

It was now, when Paul had reached his conviction with regard to the eternal activity of the pre-existent Christ, that the resources of ancient

thought, Jewish and Greek, about the Divine Immanence in nature, whether in the form of the Logos, or of Wisdom, or of the World-soul, came to Paul's assistance and enabled him to give expression to his faith. But apart from his religious experience, and the faith that was born of it, the passage in Colossians could never have been written. It was that experience—and that experience alone —which made it possible for him to attach the categories of current religious philosophy to the Person of Jesus.

The passage in Colossians is not due to a sudden flash of the imagination: nor is it an intellectual "bolt from the blue." There is evidence that the idea had for some years been growing in Paul's mind. The germ of it is found in 1 Corinthians viii. 6, "to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him." Even here the significance of Christ for the life of the cosmos is clearly brought out in the phrase "through whom are all things." It cannot, therefore, be maintained that the statement in Colossians is entirely due to the reaction of the Christological controversy in Asia Minor upon Paul's mind. The idea was born in Paul's mind before any Christological controversy arose at all. The conception may have been sharpened and intensified by the controversy, but its origin in the first instance was quite independent of this. Some of the phrases which Paul uses elsewhere in

Colossians are certainly the outcome of the controversy. His statement about Christ, for instance, that " in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form " (ii. 9), was certainly suggested by the assertion of his opponents that there was only a minimum of divinity in Christ ; but there is nothing in the great Christological statement itself which proves that its distinctive character was the outcome of the debate. In all its essential features it is the offspring of religious experience and not the child of controversy.

The Colossian statement represents the real creative moment in the history of Christology. When once this position was reached, the Prologue to the fourth Gospel and the historic creeds of Christendom followed as a matter of course. These are simply the interpretations and elucidations, in more philosophical phraseology, of the Christology of Colossians. It is on the validity of Paul's position in Colossians that the Christological issue has mainly to be fought to-day.

Dr. C. G. Montefiore in the new edition of his *Synoptic Gospels* tries to face the problem of the apotheosis of Jesus thus : " It is a wonderful thing how quickly the man Jesus grew into a divine being ; but yet, when the Hellenistic influences are reckoned in, on the one hand, and certain Jewish conceptions, upon the other, according to which the Messiah was, or was to be, no longer the purely human hero and king of Isaiah xi., but a semi-divine being sent down from heaven—when, as I

say, we remember all this, and add to it the mighty genius of Paul, the astonishing result becomes by no means inexplicable."[1] This statement, however, leaves out of account the most important factor. It does not explain what led the "mighty genius of Paul" to attach "the Hellenistic influences" and "the Jewish conceptions" to the person of Jesus.

What was there in Jesus which there was not in John the Baptist, or Hillel, or Akiba, or Philo, or Seneca, that He should have been crowned by Paul and the early Christian Church as "Lord of all"? It does not help us to compare the apotheosis of Jesus with the deification of the Roman Emperors or the worship of the Greek cults. Jesus was not a Roman Emperor or a mythological hero, but simply, if we are to believe the theory of the radical school of modern criticism, a Jewish prophet with little that was new or distinctive in His teaching. Moreover, there was much connected with His person and His work that seems to make apotheosis impossible. Was it easy for Jews, with their passionate devotion to monotheism, in spite of their Messianic theology and their "Wisdom" teaching, to endow Jesus with the attributes of Deity? Was it likely, for instance, that the Greek world would have accepted a Jew as the central figure of a new cult? And if there were no other reasons against it, would not the shameful death upon the Cross have made it impossible? As it was, the Church had to triumph

[1] Introduction, p. xlvi.

over the taunt that was so often levelled against it, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree."[1] There seems to be absolutely no road, apart from Christian experience, along which admiration for one who was nothing more than a great Jewish prophet can pass into the transcendent faith involved in the Colossian statement.

The process of deification is not such a simple and easy thing as it is often supposed to be. Simon Magus, as we read in Acts, made great claims for himself, and convinced the people of Samaria that he was the incarnation "of the power of God which is called Great" (viii. 10); but the movement he inaugurated left the merest ripple on the surface of the waters. In the third century the Neoplatonists, feeling that they could not compete with Christianity without a Christ of their own, made a bold attempt to create a divine figure out of Apollonius of Tyana.[2] They employed the greatest literary genius of the time, Philostratus, to write an idealized life of Apollonius which should take the place of the Gospels of the Christian Church. The effort was eagerly supported by the Empress, and all the influence of the Court was behind it. And yet the attempt proved in the result a sorry failure. The Neoplatonists failed completely to convince the world that Apollonius was divine.

Why should Paul have succeeded in doing for Jesus what Philostratus and his co-religionists were unable to do for Apollonius? To say that Paul was

[1] Gal. iii. 13. [2] He lived in the first century, A.D.

a greater genius than Philostratus is not a sufficient answer to the problem. To say that the former had the advantage of Hellenistic categories and Jewish Messianic theology is no reply, for the philosophy of Neoplatonism provided all the thought-forms that were necessary for the purpose. We must look for the solution rather to the *differentiæ* between the two personalities, Jesus and Apollonius, and to the *differentiæ* in the various forms of religious experience that came from contact with each of them. The other factors were the same in each case. The literary genius of Paul is equated by the literary genius of Philostratus, the available categories of Jewish and Hellenistic thought correspond to similar ideas in Neoplatonism. It is in the personality of the hero that the real difference lies. Jesus had exerted over the minds and souls of men an influence and a power such as Apollonius never wielded, and it was this religious experience that made possible and inevitable in the one case that which was quite impossible in the other.

We may now turn to the remarkable Christological statement of Philippians ii. 5–11. Unlike the Colossian passage, it is not part of a Christological argument. It is introduced almost casually as an illustration of the Christian virtue of humility, which Paul happens to be inculcating at the moment. The argument is well brought out in Lightfoot's paraphrase of the verses: "Reflect in your own minds the mind of Christ Jesus. Be humble, as He also was humble. Though existing before the

worlds in the Eternal Godhead, yet He did not cling with avidity to the prerogatives of His divine majesty, did not ambitiously display His equality with God; but divested Himself of the glories of heaven, and took upon Him the nature of a servant, assuming the likeness of men. Nor was this all. Having thus appeared among men in the fashion of a man, He humbled Himself yet more, and carried out His obedience even to dying. Nor did He die by a common death. He was crucified, as the lowest malefactor is crucified. But as was His humility, so also was His exaltation. God raised Him to a pre-eminent height, and gave to Him a title and a dignity far above all dignities and titles else. For to the name and majesty of Jesus all created things in heaven and earth and hell shall pay homage on bended knee; and every tongue with praise and thanksgiving shall declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, and in and for Him shall glorify God the Father."[1] We have in this passage the exposition of Paul's final Christological belief—and it is the first full and developed statement of the doctrine of the Incarnation. There are, of course, hints of this doctrine in the earlier Epistles, as, for instance, in the phrase "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor,"[2] or in the words of Galatians, "God sent forth his son, born of a woman" (iv. 4), or the parallel idea in Romans (viii. 3), "God sending His own son in the likeness of sinful flesh";

[1] *Commentary on Philippians*, p. 110.
[2] 2 Cor viii. 9.

but the doctrine is never worked out in detail till we come to the passage in Philippians. The development of Christian thought upon the nature of the Person of Christ seems to have passed through three stages. (1) In the earliest stage the man Jesus is raised to the rank of Divinity, and exalted to the right hand of God, by a quasi-Adoptionist theory, as in the speeches of Peter in the early chapters of Acts. (2) In the next phase, through the working of Christian experience Jesus becomes a heavenly pre-existent Divine Being who was the agent of God in the creation of the Universe. (3) In order to explain how this heavenly being became the man Jesus, the doctrine of an Incarnation was evolved. In the earliest form of Christian thinking the stress was laid upon the belief in the deification of a human figure, in the latest form upon the humanisation of a Divine Being. The Philippian statement, therefore, is the natural and necessary corollary of the Christology of Colossians.

The idea of Incarnation is, of course, not a specifically Christian doctrine. It is found in many types of religion. It occurs in many forms in the religions of India. There are many illustrations of it to be discovered in Greek mythology. It is a common factor in the faith of the contemporary Greek cults and the Mystery Religions. There is a phrase in *Poimandres* which affords an almost exact parallel to the statement of Paul. Of the *Urmensch*, a heavenly man who is described as being in the form (*μορφή*) of God, it is said that " being immortal

and having authority over all things, he endures the mortal lot, being made subject to fate."[1]

But the essential fact is that Paul used these categories—the highest available in the thought of the time—for the interpretation of Christ. The real significance lies not so much in the categories which are used as in the application of these categories to Christ. Paul had been driven by the postulates of his Christian experience into a position which made a doctrine of Incarnation absolutely essential to his thinking. When once the position of Colossians had been reached, nothing but a doctrine of Incarnation could explain the human life of Jesus.

The main stages in the argument of the "Philippians" statement are as follows: (1) The pre-existent life of Christ. He is described as being in "the form of God." It is a doubtful point of exegesis whether it is possible to press the meaning of the Greek word translated "form" (*μορφή*) as Lightfoot does, and make it indicate the possession of the essential nature and attributes of Deity. We must certainly not put more meaning into the phrase "in the form of God" than we are prepared to put into its parallel, "in the form of a servant," where the same word is used. It is rather to the phrase

[1] 12 *seq.*: *ἀθάνατος ὢν καὶ πάντων τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἔχων τὰ θνητοῦ πάσχει ὑποκείμενος τῇ εἱμαρμένῃ.* Quoted in Moffatt's *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*,[2] p. 172. According, however, to Walter Scott and most recent scholars, the *Poimandres* is not earlier than the second century A.D.

The quotations which Moffat gives from the *Ascension of Isaiah* are irrelevant, because they certainly belong to a later date and reflect later Christian speculation.

" equality with God " that we must look for material for forming an estimate of the position held by Christ in His pre-existent state. (2) The first act of humiliation. He did not cling to His regal position in heaven, but He emptied Himself of His dignity and took upon Himself not merely the nature of a man but the nature of a slave. (3) The second act of humiliation—as if it were not humiliation enough for Christ to leave His Father's throne and become man, there are still greater depths to which He submitted to descend—He came under the power of death in its most horrible form, viz. crucifixion. (4) The subsequent exaltation. For His self-sacrifice in the act of His incarnation and in His death upon the Cross, He was exalted again to the right hand of God, and received the homage and worship of the whole universe.

With the passage in Philippians, following as it does the Colossian statement, Christology came to maturity and attained its full stature. There was, of course, room still left for philosophical interpretation and the more precise definition of some of the details, but all the main lineaments of the doctrine of Christ have now been drawn in outline. It is one of the great achievements of Paul that, out of his great experience of Christ, he evolved a philosophy of the Christian religion which has been the centre of orthodox Christian doctrine ever since.

We may now pass to the Epistle to the Hebrews. It stands half-way between the Epistles of Paul and the fourth Gospel, and represents an important

landmark in the development of Christological thought. To what extent the thought of Hebrews is dependent upon Paul it is difficult to determine. There is a great deal in it that is like the thought of Paul, but this is linked with much that is entirely dissimilar. If we could be sure that Hebrews was entirely independent of Paul, it would prove that the same Christological results were reached by two different thinkers working along different lines. But the facts are too uncertain to warrant us in making this deduction.

The real significance of the Epistle to the Hebrews lies in the fact that the writer is the first to make explicit use of the categories of the Platonic philosophy in the interpretation of Christ. He was faced with the problem which constituted such a serious difficulty for the Apostolic age, How does Christianity stand in relation to Judaism ? If the Old Testament contained a divine revelation, as every Christian was prepared to admit that it did, what room was there left for the new faith ? How was it possible to avoid the dilemma which was afterwards used in Islam in reference to the Koran ? If Christianity was in agreement with the Old Testament, it seemed to be superfluous : if it was not in agreement with it, how could it be true at all ?

But the problem had another side to it. If the Jewish law had no finality about it, how could Christianity be sure about the finality of its own faith ? If the Jewish law was only a passing phase

in the history of religion, might not Christianity be another phase of a similar kind? Might not every argument that was used to demonstrate the temporary character of the Jewish faith be turned with equal effect against Christianity itself? The writer, therefore, was confronted by a double problem. He had to prove that there was no finality about the Jewish law, and he had to do it in such a way that his line of reasoning did not recoil upon the head of Christianity. Or, in other words, he had to demonstrate the finality of the revelation and work of Christ by means of proofs which could not be used by his opponents to rehabilitate the Jewish law, which had been, as he claimed, superseded by the Christian faith.

In discharging this great intellectual task the writer uses two main weapons. There is first of all the appeal to experience. The offerings and sacrifices of the Jewish law did not cleanse the conscience of the worshipper,[1] since "the blood of bulls and goats could not possibly take away sin."[2] The priests "can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. Else would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more conscience of sins."[3] But the sense of forgiveness and the peace of mind and the purification of conscience, which the Old Testament sacrifices could never bring to the heart, were realized by Christians

[1] ix. 9. [2] x. 4. [3] x. 1, 2.

in their experience of the salvation that had been wrought out by Christ. Christ "became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation."[1] They discovered that He was "able to succour them that are tempted,"[2] because "able to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," as having been "tempted like as we are, yet without sin."[3]

But the writer of Hebrews is not content merely to appeal to Christian experience, even though its verdict may be quite decisive. He is anxious to find a philosophical explanation and justification of the Christian position. And it is at this point that the Platonic philosophy comes to his assistance. The characteristic principle in the philosophy of Plato is his doctrine of Ideas. These ideas were regarded as the eternal and unchangeable realities. They constituted the world of real existence, which could be apprehended only by reason, in distinction from the material world which is apprehended through the senses. Everything on earth is supposed by Plato to have its counterpart in the heavens, and to embody in itself more or less imperfectly the celestial archetype. These ideas are the supreme realities. They are not mere abstractions. They actually exist in the heavens. This theory is taken up by the author of Hebrews in the contrast which he draws between the earthly and heavenly tabernacles. The true sanctuary "which the Lord built and not man" is "in heaven."[4] The earthly tabernacle is but a shadow and a copy of the

[1] v. 9. [2] ii. 18. [3] iv. 15. [4] viii. 2.

heavenly reality.[1] The metaphor of the shadow goes back to Plato's famous allegory of the cave-dwellers in the seventh book of the *Republic*. In this Plato pictures mankind as shut up in the mouth of a cave, with their faces turned towards the wall at the back, and so fixed that they cannot move them round. Across the open front of the cave figures are continually flitting to and fro, but all that the prisoners can see is the shadows which their forms cast upon the wall on which their gaze is set. If the prisoners were taken out of the cave into the open, their eyes would be blinded by excess of light, and it would need a long training for them to be acclimatized to the new world. The allegory is easy to read. Mankind dwells in the cave of the phenomenal world—the prison-house of sense. It sees only the shadows and reflections of the true realities under conditions of time and space.

In Old Testament times the Jewish people were like Plato's cave-dwellers. They had in their law and in their sanctuary and in their priesthood only the imperfect shadows and not the true realities. Their religion provided them merely with an imperfect sacrifice offered by an imperfect High Priest in an imperfect sanctuary. In the New Testament, on the other hand, the heavenly realities themselves have broken into our world of time and space. Men have been brought out of the cave and their eyes have been opened. The Epistle to the Hebrews, which seems at first sight to the casual

[1] viii. 5 ; ix. 23, x. 1.

reader to be the most Jewish book in the whole of the New Testament and to move entirely within the limited range of Jewish ideas, is in reality from beginning to end impregnated with Greek thought. It is the first real attempt to create a philosophy of the Christian religion. It defends and expands the Christian faith and experience in terms of the Platonic system of philosophy. Condensed into a single phrase, and using the terms in the Platonic sense, its main theme is this : Jesus Christ is the ideal High Priest Who offered the ideal sacrifice in the ideal sanctuary.

The final stage in the development of New Testament Christology is reached in the fourth Gospel. Nothing need be said on the vexed question of the authorship of the Gospel, because for our particular purpose the matter is not very relevant. Whatever may be the historical value of the fourth Gospel (and upon this point there is the utmost diversity of opinion among scholars), it can scarcely be denied that it represents the faith and theology of the Church—or at any rate, a certain section of the Church—at the commencement of the second century, and that it is a magnificent attempt to interpret Christian experience in terms of historical fact. The Christ of experience is read back into the record of the Jesus of history, and the Jesus of history is interpreted afresh in the light of the Christ of experience. To what extent this method of procedure affected the truth of the narrative is altogether outside the scope of our enquiry.

For our purpose the fourth Gospel falls into two distinct divisions: (1) The Discourses put into the mouth of Jesus. (2) The Prologue or Introduction. These two elements must not be confused, for ever since Harnack wrote his famous article in 1892 in the *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, it has been quite clear that they are out of harmony with each other and represent two different interpretations of Jesus. In the Prologue, for instance, Jesus is construed in terms of the Logos; in the rest of the Gospel He is construed in terms of sonship. One of the great mistakes that the exegesis of the fourth Gospel has almost always made is that it has been too apt to interpret the *theologoumena* of the body of the Gospel in the light of the Logos doctrine which is worked out in the Preface, and to read the theological ideas of the Prologue into the statements ascribed to Jesus in the Discourses. The most notorious instance of this is to be found in the common interpretation which is given to the phrase "I and the Father are one."[1] These words have generally been given a metaphysical meaning, and much effort has been spent to reconcile the statement so interpreted with the other saying attributed to Jesus, "The Father is greater than I."[2] Even Westcott, in his note upon the passage, says that the words must mean "I and my Father are one essence," and adds, "it seems clear that the unity here spoken of cannot fall short of unity of essence." But this is not the only place where the term

[1] x. 30. [2] xiv. 28.

translated "one" (ἕν) is used. The same word occurs several times in the seventeenth chapter. Jesus prays for the unity of the disciples, that they may "be 'one' even as we are."[1] The same idea is repeated in a later verse, when the scope of the prayer is enlarged to include the converts who will be won to Christianity by the preaching of the disciples.[2] Exactly the same term is used still a third time in a later petition, "that they may be perfected into one."[3] We have no right to attach a higher meaning to the term "one" when it is used of Jesus than it is possible to give to it when it is used of the disciples. When Jesus speaks of the unity of the disciples, it is impossible to give the word the sense of metaphysical unity or unity of essence; and we have, therefore, no justification at all for reading this meaning into the word in the phrase, "I and the Father are one," more particularly as in His prayer[4] Jesus draws a parallel between the unity that exists between the Father and the Son and the unity that ought to exist between the disciples in their relation to each other.

The fact is that the portrait which is drawn of Jesus in the Discourses of the fourth Gospel is the portrait of the supreme mystic. The language in which the fourth Gospel (apart from the Preface) describes the relationship between Jesus and the Father is, all the way through, the language of mysticism. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself unless He sees the Father

[1] xvii. 11. [2] xvii. 20. [3] xvii. 23. [4] xvii. 11.

doing it. What He does, that also the Son does likewise. . . . I can do nothing of myself. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I am not seeking my own will but the will of Him that sent me. . . . My teaching is not mine, but the teaching of Him that sent me. If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God."[1] It is, then, in this mystical sense, and in this mystical sense alone, that the words " I and the Father are one " must be interpreted. Every man, as has been said before, finds in the primitive Christian tradition the Christ of his own soul. The author of the first Gospel, because he was a Jew, sees in Jesus the fulfilment of Messianic prophecy. The writer of the fourth Gospel, because he was a mystic (perhaps, as Canon Streeter thinks, " the greatest of all the mystics "), sees in Jesus the perfect mystic, the One Whose soul was perfectly attuned to the Eternal and Whose communion with God was so absolutely unclouded and unbroken that it amounted to spiritual and moral identity.

The question may be asked whether this interpretation of Jesus is in any sense true to historic fact, or whether the portrait of Jesus in the fourth Gospel is run into the moulds of mysticism because it is drawn by the pen of one who was himself a mystic. " The Synoptic Gospels," as Dean Inge has said, " are not written in the religious dialect of mysticism." There is one greatly debated passage

[1] John v. 19, 30 ; vii. 16, 17.

in Matthew and Luke (and therefore coming from Q) which certainly implies a mystical relation between the Father and Jesus. "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22). If these words represent an authentic utterance of Jesus (and the fact that they are found in Q is a very strong piece of evidence in their favour), it is clear that the fundamental idea involved in the mystical interpretation of Jesus in the Discourses of the fourth Gospel can be traced back to His own statement. We are driven, at any rate, to admit that the fundamental idea, even supposing it does not go back to Jesus Himself, originated at a very early date, since it is found to be incorporated in Q, which is usually dated as early as the year A.D. 50 The roots of the interpretation of Jesus in the fourth Gospel are to be found, therefore, in the most primitive Christian document with which we are acquainted, a document which seems to have been written at an earlier date than anything else in our New Testament. This means that the germ of the idea which is developed in the fourth Gospel had existed in the thought of the Christian Church for half a century.

Nor is it difficult to see why it is that the author of the fourth Gospel fastened upon this idea and expanded it in the Discourses of his Gospel. In the

interval between Q (assuming for the sake of argument that the idea was first of all found in Q) and the Gospel of John, there had come into existence the mystical experience of the Christian Church, and this mystical experience undoubtedly helped to create one of the categories which were used in the Johannine Literature for the interpretation of Christ. The mystical relation that existed between the Christian and his risen Lord suggested that a parallel—though far more perfect—relation of the same order existed between Christ and God.

It was felt by the Church that what Christ was to it in its deepest religious experiences, God was to Christ, only in a higher and far more perfect way. The mystical experience of the Christian was imperfect, broken, intermittent at the best. Christ's experience, on the other hand, was complete, constant, and unvarying. Accepting, then, for the sake of argument (without stopping to discuss the merits of the case), the conclusions of the most radical school of criticism, we are yet entitled to say that the fourth Gospel fastens upon a conception of Jesus which is at any rate as old as Q, and develops it in the light of the religious experience of the Christian Church. It may be, as Norden and Wetter suppose, that the writer of the fourth Gospel has sometimes pressed into service the phrases used in the worship of the Greek cults or in the hymnology of Babylon and Egypt ;[1] but the *vera causa*

[1] The former view is taken by G. P. Wetter in his *Der Sohn Gottes*, the latter by E. Norden in his *Agnostos Theos*.

of the Christology in the Discourses of the fourth Gospel is to be found not in the terminology of current religious thought but in Christian experience. At the highest computation the religious cults of the ages provided only the language which enabled Christian experience to find self-expression.

We now come to the Prologue. It is probable that the Prologue was originally much larger than the opening paragraph of the first chapter of John suggests. It is not likely that its author would have omitted from his theological statement so many elements that were vital to his own theological position—the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, for instance, or the doctrine of the significance of the death upon the Cross for the forgiveness of human sin. It is within the bounds of possibility that further sections of the original Prologue are to be found in the third chapter. In iii. 13 the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus suddenly breaks off, and a new paragraph is introduced by the words "And no man hath ascended into heaven, except him who descended out of heaven," the Son of Man. The conjunction at the commencement of the clause shows that the verse was at one time intimately connected with something that preceded it. There is no point of attachment to which it can be linked in the context in which it is found in the third chapter; but it fits on most admirably to the close of the Prologue in chapter i., and seems to form a parallel sentence to i. 18: "No man hath seen God

at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. . . . And no man hath ascended into heaven except him who descended out of Heaven," the Son of Man. If this argument is valid, we may assume that the third chapter contains two additional sections to the Prologue : (1) vv. 13–21, (2) vv. 31–36.[1] Put together, these sections form a sort of theological manifesto of the writer's belief, the ideas of which gradually unfold themselves and sweep on in majestic flow.

But the argument with which we are here concerned does not greatly depend upon the validity of the reconstruction of the Prologue. For our purpose, the essential point in the Prologue is the identification of Jesus with the Logos.

There are two questions which at once arise in connection with the identification : (1) What were the reasons which led the writer of the fourth Gospel to interpret Jesus in terms of the Logos ? (2) From what source did he derive his conception of the Logos ? The first problem is by far the more important of the two.

There are two answers to the first question : (1) The fourth Gospel does not stand alone. It is not an isolated document. It represents the climax of a long Christological development which had been in progress for some sixty or seventy years. The

[1] I have given the arguments upon which this theory is based in an article on " The Structure of the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel," in the *Expositor* for August, 1914. (Eighth Series, Vol. VIII, pp. 167–177.)

really creative moment in the development, as we have already seen, is the great Christological statement in Colossians and the Philippian statement which forms its natural corollary. The fourth Gospel simply takes up these statements, which were written some forty years before its time, and translates them into terms of the current philosophy of the time. (2) But the Prologue to the fourth Gospel is not merely the formal endorsement of an older Christology, and the interpretation of it in philosophical terms; it, too, is the outcome of a real and vivid Christian experience. We have already seen that the mystical experience of the Church suggested a mystical explanation of the Person of Christ. The character of the union between Christ and the Father transcended, of course, the limits of the mystical experience of communion between the believer and his Lord. It was a union that was perfect and unbroken. It differed in such a degree from the ordinary mystical experience, that it seemed also to differ in kind, and consequently the transition from a mystical to a metaphysical interpretation of Jesus was not difficult to make. The metaphysical interpretation of Jesus in the Prologue is based upon the mystical interpretation in the Discourses, and that in turn comes out of the mystical experience of the Church. The high Christology of Colossians could not have survived for a whole generation, unless it had been vindicated by the data of Christian experience. There is something more than a merely intellectual

relation between the Prologue and the Colossian statement, and that further relation is to be found in the constant verification of Christological theory in Christian experience.

The second question is quite a subordinate issue, and has little more than an academic interest for our enquiry. The source from which the author of the fourth Gospel derived his conception of the Logos does not affect the validity of our argument. Rendel Harris thinks that all the data for the thought of the Prologue were obtained from the Wisdom Literature of Judaism and from the Rabbinical doctrine of the Memra. Others, on the contrary, think that its *fons et origo* must be sought for in the writings of Plato. A third school looks to the Stoic belief in the *anima mundi* as the suggestive cause of the idea of the Prologue. The probability is that the Logos-theory was a common category of thought at the time, as common perhaps as the theory of Evolution is to-day, and that it is unnecessary for us to attempt to find a more specific origin of the idea as it occurs in the Prologue.[1] It is a remarkable fact that the terms which obtained the greatest vogue in the Christian Church were those which were common to both Jewish and Hellenic thought. The term "Ecclesia," for instance, is used in the Septuagint to denote the Assembly of Israel: it is also the term which describes the meeting of citizens in a Greek

[1] I am glad to find that this view is accepted and developed by Krebs in *Der Logos als Heiland im ersten Jahrhundert*: *cf.* Rawlinson, *The New Testament Doctrine of Christ*, p. 209.

democracy. The term "Lord" is used in the Septuagint to translate the ineffable Tetragrammaton: it is also the name most commonly used to describe the deities worshipped in the Greek cults. And it is highly probable that it was because the idea of the Logos had affinities with both Jewish and Greek philosophical thought that its usage became so popular in the Christian Church. But, whatever be its origin, the significant fact for us is that the author of the fourth Gospel fastened upon the conception of the Logos for his interpretation of Christ, because it was the highest available philosophical category in existence at the time.

The Prologue, though it represents an intellectual achievement of a very high order for Christianity at the commencement of the second century, does not provide us to-day with an adequate solution of the Christological problem. It uses philosophical categories which have not the same meaning for the modern world as they had for the ancient.

The term Logos is not familiar to us to-day, and only an expert in ancient philosophy can really appreciate the use that is made of it in the Prologue. Then, again, the two fundamental issues for us to-day: (1) the relation between the Logos and God and (2) the relation between the Divine and Human natures in the Incarnate Christ, are left unsolved. The first problem is dealt with in two clauses—"The Logos was with God," "The Logos was God": but these phrases only accentuate the issue and do not provide any solution. The first clause emphasizes

the distinction between the Logos and God, and guards us against any interpretation on Sabellian lines. The second clause emphasizes the unity between the Logos and God, and protects the thought of the Church from Ditheism. We are left, therefore, with the conception of unity in distinction and distinction in unity, but the Prologue does not provide us with a formula to define what the relationship actually was. The same difficulty occurs in the case of the second problem. Again we have two clauses and no explanatory formula. The first tells us that "the Logos became flesh," the second that "the Logos tabernacled among us." The one stresses the reality of the humanity of Jesus, the other the reality of the divinity which "tabernacled amongst us"—but no attempt is made to show how the two ideas are to be brought into juxtaposition. It was owing to these defects in the statements of the Prologue that the Christological controversies of the third and fourth centuries were necessary. The Nicene and Chalcedonian statements are the attempt of later Christian thought to find the missing formulæ.

We have now traced in outline the main stages in the development of Christology from the Benediction to the Prologue of the fourth Gospel. We have seen how the reality of Christian experience drove the mind of the Church onward and ever onward, in its quest for an adequate interpretation of the Christ Who had become the living centre in which that

experience was focussed. The statements in the Pauline Epistles and in the Johannine writings are experiments in Christological interpretation. They are not always in complete harmony with each other. The conception of "the heavenly man," for instance, is not compatible with the conception of the Logos. But the one fact which underlies them all is this—Christian experience demands that only the highest available categories should be used in the interpretation of Jesus. The Christians of the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic ages used the terms and categories which they found in existence in the philosophical and theological thought of their ages. They could take no other course. We ourselves are under similar limitations to-day. Christianity did not bring its own interpretation with it. It brought its facts, and the religious experience which those facts created. It left the interpretation of the facts and of the experience to the mind of the Church. The mind of the Church did its utmost to find the true interpretation; and it proved so successful in its attempts that all the later centuries accepted its interpretation as the basis of later discussion, and expanded it as the particular issues of the hour required.

We, too, are the legatees of the great tradition. We do not hold ourselves bound by the *ipsissima verba* of the New Testament interpretation. But we are bound by the spirit of the quest which made the New Testament interpretation possible. Our task is to translate, as far as may be possible for us,

the first-century terms and formulæ into the language of the twentieth century. The condition which Christian experience imposed on the thinkers of the Apostolic age it imposes still upon us, and that condition is: "None but the highest terms and categories of thought are adequate for the true interpretation of Jesus Christ."

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